

# Infantry

May-June 2004



## Urban

# Operations

Counter-Mortar Operations in the Sunni Triangle (Page 8)

Task Force China in Baghdad:

TF 3-15 Defends the Crossroads (Page 19)

A Quick Reaction Platoon Engages Iraqi Insurgents (Page 38)

**BG BENJAMIN C. FREAKLEY**  
Commandant, The Infantry School

**RUSSELL A. ENO**  
Editor

**MICHELLE J. ROWAN**  
Deputy Editor

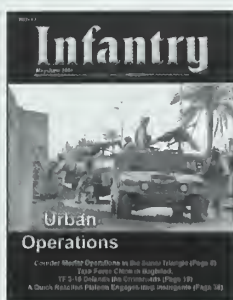
**BETTY J. BYRD**  
Editorial Assistant

#### FRONT COVER:

Soldiers with the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry, 10th Mountain Division, provide perimeter security while Soldiers raid a shop suspected of selling antioalition CDs and DVDs in Al Fallujah, Iraq. (Photo by Staff Sergeant Charles B. Johnson)

#### BACK COVER:

Soldiers with C Company, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, dismount a Stryker Infantry Carrier Vehicle during a patrol in Mosul, Iraq. (Photo by Sergeant Jeremiah Johnson)



This medium is approved for official dissemination of material designed to keep individuals within the Army knowledgeable of current and emerging developments within their areas of expertise for the purpose of enhancing their professional development.

By Order of the Secretary of the Army:  
Peter J. Schoomaker  
General, United States Army  
Chief of Staff

Official:

*Joel B. Hudson*

**JOEL B. HUDSON**  
Administrative Assistant to the  
Secretary of the Army  
0413905

Distribution: Special

# Infantry

MAY-JUNE 2004

Volume 93, Number 3

## FEATURES

### 19 TASK FORCE CHINA IN BAGHDAD: TF 3-15 DEFENDS THE CROSSROADS

Arthur A. Durante

### 31 MEDIA ON THE BATTLEFIELD - "A NONLETHAL FIRE"

Captain David Connolly

### 38 A QUICK REACTION PLATOON ENGAGES IRAQI INSURGENTS

First Lieutenant Timothy Meadors

## DEPARTMENTS

### 1 COMMANDANT'S NOTE

### 3 INFANTRY LETTERS

### 4 INFANTRY NEWS

### 5 MASTER GUNNER PAGE - 29TH INFANTRY REGIMENT

### 6 RANGER TRAINING BRIGADE NOTES

### 8 PROFESSIONAL FORUM

### 8 COUNTER-MORTAR OPERATIONS IN THE SUNNI TRIANGLE

Major Darron L. Wright and Captain Alexander G. Williams

### 11 WORDS MATTER — TERMS USED INCORRECTLY CAN CAUSE CONFUSION

Captain Michael Dane Acord

### 12 WHY ORGANIC FIRES?

Colonel Robert F. Barry II

### 43 TRAINING NOTES

### 43 TACTICS, TECHNIQUES, AND PROCEDURES FOR THE 60MM MORTAR

Staff Sergeant Jason E. Levy

### 47 MANAGING THE RANGE ENVIRONMENT FOR INFANTRY TRAINING

Jason R. Applegate

### 49 TACTICAL VIGNETTE — AMBUSH AT QUFUS TANGAY

### 51 SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

### 52 BOOK REVIEWS

*Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.*

• **INFANTRY** (ISSN: 0019-9532) is an Army professional bulletin prepared for bimonthly publication by the U.S. Army Infantry School at Building 4, Fort Benning, Georgia. • Although it contains professional information for the Infantryman, the content does not necessarily reflect the official Army position and does not supersede any information presented in other official Army publications. • Unless otherwise stated, the views herein are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Department of Defense or any element of it. • Official distribution is to infantry and infantry-related units and to appropriate staff agencies and service schools. • Direct communication concerning editorial policies and subscription rates is authorized to Editor, INFANTRY, P.O. Box 52005, Fort Benning, GA 31995-2005. • Telephones: (706) 545-2350 or 545-6951, DSN 835-2350 or 835-6951; e-mail [rowanm@benning.army.mil](mailto:rowanm@benning.army.mil). • Bulk rate postage paid at Columbus, Georgia, and other mailing offices. • **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to INFANTRY, P.O. Box 52005, Fort Benning, GA 31995-2005. • USPS Publication No. 370630.



# Commandant's Note

BRIGADIER GENERAL BENJAMIN C. FREAKLEY

---

## The Experimental Force (EXFOR)

### LINKING DOCTRINE, TRAINING, AND TECHNOLOGY

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt first spoke of the “great arsenal of democracy” in his Fireside Chat of 29 December 1940, and that enormous industrial and technological base is even more vital today than it was when he described it. In 1940 we were not yet at war, but in that radio broadcast he warned of war’s imminence and exhorted Americans to gird themselves for combat. Today, we are a nation at war, and our men and women in uniform are in the heat of battle, carrying the fight to the enemy and restoring hope to the oppressed. While our intelligence and public safety agencies are working tirelessly to ferret out and otherwise thwart enemies of the Republic, America’s enormous scientific and manufacturing base is introducing weapons and equipment whose quality cannot be equaled by any other nation. But producing the tools of war is not enough; we must evaluate their effectiveness within the constructs of doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leader development, personnel and facilities (DOTMLPF). We now have an organization designed and structured to do just that.

Early this year, the 29th Infantry Regiment stood up a new experimental force (EXFOR) platoon which will work in conjunction with the Soldier Battle Lab to assess new concepts, equipment, organizations, and TTP’s prior to fielding or implementation. EXFOR will provide the Army with proponent feedback and fielding assistance. New equipment training teams (NETT) and the rapid equipping force (REF) will continue to support the fielding of materiel, but some items need to be fully evaluated before the items are fielded, to ensure their reliability in combat. Our intent is not to slow down the fielding process, but to augment it. All lessons



learned from the assessments will be provided to the materiel developer. Some feedback might require redesign, while others will receive our support in the way of training assistance, manpower, and sponsorship. This will include our deployment of personnel to Theater to augment the REF during initial fielding and subsequent handover.

Historically, assessment and evaluations of new equipment were done in operational units with requirements, but with low priority in the Army’s fielding plan. Today we cannot risk delay in fielding new weapons and equipment. OPTEMPO for our deployable Army is high and units are unable to assess new equipment by themselves. As their representative, TRADOC will step in to assist. While the support of our tenant units may still be necessary to meet some requirements, the EXFOR platoon — which is intended to eventually expand into a 160-Soldier fully equipped company — will provide a reliable, experienced means of executing the assessments and evaluations that innovation and progress demand. They will be manned and equipped to assess Bradley, Stryker, Motorized, UA, and air assault units. When the new organization is up to speed, we will be able to execute live, virtual, and constructive experiments to complement Army initiatives. The Soldiers and leaders of EXFOR will be familiar with the assessment process and their training level with the process will mean that no inordinate time need be lost training up units to evaluate equipment. In short, the Soldiers of EXFOR will soon become proficient at what they do, and will do it more accurately and expeditiously than ever before.

The Army’s first EXFOR platoon hit the ground running. Its first mission was to participate in the Chief of Staff of the

Army's Leader to Led study and it is now preparing to take part in the Land Warrior Analysis of Alternatives, supporting the program manager for Land Warrior. This initiative will evaluate the performance and progress of the Land Warrior system, while assessing alternatives to the system. An examination of these options will compare the cost effectiveness of fielding the Land Warrior System versus that of its alternatives. Future projects for EXFOR include an assessment of a new Air Assault Expeditionary Force (AAEF). The AAEF evaluation will also assess the critical issues of Soldier lethality and survivability, and the extent to which networking can best support them.

The EXFOR and Soldier Battle Laboratory will draw upon a wide array of internal and external assets in carrying out their missions. The experimental assets at their disposal include the Army Research Institute, Army research Laboratory, Human Research and Engineering Directorate, Army Test and Experimentation Command, and the instrumented McKenna MOUT site. The Squad Synthetic Environment, the Close Combat Tactical Trainer, the Joint Conflict and Tactical Simulation program, and JANUS are all some of the robust simulations capabilities EXFOR can call upon. We can also transition from electronic media to on-the-ground training at our three Ranger training facilities at Camps Darby, Merrill, and Rudder. Fort Benning has range complexes that accommodate individual weapons from the 9mm pistol and M16A1 rifle up to 155mm howitzers. Army and Air Force aircraft can operate out of Lawson Army Airfield, a flight landing strip adjacent to the McKenna MOUT site, and insert Soldiers into numerous LZ's and DZ's, while waterborne operations take place on the Chattahoochee River and selected ponds on post.

Proponents for infantry-related programs can rapidly develop and implement emerging doctrine by tapping into the infantry noncommissioned officer education system, the officer

---

**The Experimental Force is a timely initiative whose cost effectiveness will pay off in the immediate future and in the years to come.**

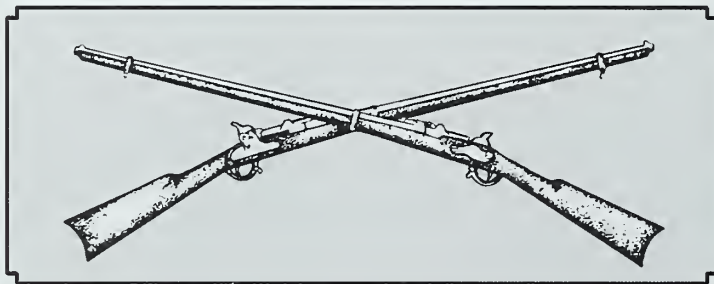
---

education system, and subject matter experts organic to Fort Benning in the areas of mortar, small arms, light and heavy machine gun, sniper, Bradley, Stryker, land navigation, antitank, Ranger, Pathfinder, Airborne and Air Assault, and urban operations. Tenant units and agencies such as the 75th Ranger Regiment; 3d Brigade, 3d Infantry Division; the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation; the United States Army Marksmanship Unit; and the three TRADOC Systems Managers all stand ready to lend their

own specialized expertise to this watershed initiative. Finally, Fort Benning is ideally situated to draw upon assets of other key installations. Fort Stewart; Fort Gordon; Fort Rucker; Dobbins, Moody, Eglin, and Robins Air Force Bases; Fort McClellan, Camp Lejeune, Hurlbert Field, and the Port of Jacksonville all lie within reasonable proximity to the Home of the Infantry.

The Experimental Force is a timely initiative whose cost effectiveness will pay off in the immediate future and in the years to come. EXFOR will enable us to assess and evaluate emerging initiatives as we continue the transformation of the Army. Many of us will recall the Fort Benning of the Vietnam era, when timely feedback from the Southeast Asian Theater found resonance in the doctrinal, tactical, and weapons products under development and evaluation. Today we once again find ourselves at war, but our data processing capabilities are light years ahead of those of the Vietnam era; feedback on Al Qaeda and Iraqi tactics, weapons, and improvised explosive devices — to name but a few — are flooding computer screens and are in turn being transformed into products useful to those superb Soldiers who are relentlessly tracking down an enemy halfway around the world. The arsenal of democracy is alive and well, and doing its job. We are proud to point to the 29th Infantry Regiment's experimental force as an innovative and vital part of America's war effort.

Follow me!





# INFANTRY LETTERS



## Putting Snipers to Better Use

Before the war in Iraq began, a lot of attention was given to tanks, Bradley fighting vehicles, Stealth bombers — all the high-speed 21st century weapons. But somehow, either ignored or forgotten, the highly effective sniper team was often left out of the planning stages and during operations. After serving in two different units and talking with snipers in other units, I've noticed the same problem. Many leaders may not know how to properly employ a sniper team or the capabilities a skilled sniper team offers. We can buy all the newest high-speed toys in the world, but nothing will put a bullet 1,000 meters down range into a man-sized target better than a good sniper.

When the war kicked off, there were a few units that had their sniper teams picking off bad guys and doing good things for the Army, but some still weren't being used to their fullest potential. Some people may assume that on today's modern battlefield with the JDAMs (Joint Direct Attack Munitions), Javelins, and Apache gunships, there's no use for this little guy with his little rifle. Once we started moving through the bigger towns and cities of Iraq, more precise shooting was needed. Leaders realized that they couldn't just level an apartment building that had an RPG team in it because there were also families in that same building. Or they couldn't use the coax (machine gun) on the enemy because there were too many civilians running around in front of them. Then someone finally said, "We need more snipers out here!" Only then did the demand go out for more snipers to be trained. I guess we only train them when we need them, right?

I think the remedy for this "sniper ignorance" is to have unit commanders take more interest and spend a little more time and money on their sniper sections. Most of the problems seem to be in the mechanized infantry units. Some of these units don't even have sniper sections; they have a two-man team in each company. This results in less-productive training, less

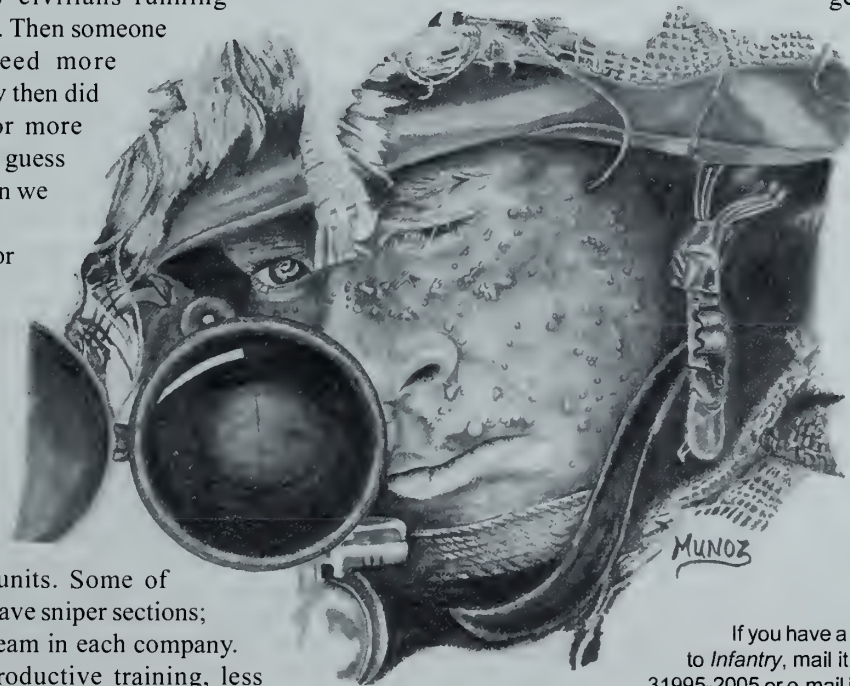
attention, little or no support, and fewer Soldiers sent to Sniper School. There are others that agree with me about having a nine to 10-man section permanently attached to a battalion's scout platoon. This way they get the attention and support they need. They will be able to train together without having to coordinate through three different chains of command. They can establish better SOPs and training plans with all qualified snipers working together. Also, being attached to the scouts will provide them with the speed, maneuverability, security, and logistical support on the battlefield. The other option would be to attach one team to each company only during field exercises, deployments, and during war. Another solution to the leadership's inexperience with snipers is to send more officers to the SEO (Sniper Employment Officer) course. That way there will be somebody in the higher chain of command that knows something about employment. I've been in six years, and I've only met one officer that has attended the course.

Another good way to learn about how to employ snipers is to just ask. Instead of telling them what you want them to do, ask them how they can best be used. Maybe he has a better idea, maybe not.

After tackling these few problems, you should have a smooth-running, highly trained, and motivated sniper section that is always geared up and ready to accomplish any mission thrown at them — be it training or war. I hope this letter will open some leader's eyes to the assets they have in their control so that they can properly use them to their advantage. In the end, it works out better for the leadership, the Soldiers, and the unit.

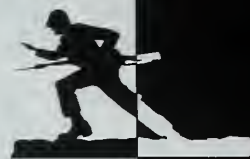
— SERGEANT ADAM T. WILLIAMS

2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry, 1st Armored Division



If you have a letter or article you would like to submit to *Infantry*, mail it to P.O. Box 52005, Fort Benning, GA 31995-2005 or e-mail it to [rowanm@benning.army.mil](mailto:rowanm@benning.army.mil).

# INFANTRY NEWS



## 'On Point' Shares OIF Lessons Learned

JOE BURLAS, ARMY NEWS SERVICE

A little more than a year after the end of major hostilities, the Army released May 25 its first major study on operations that liberated the Iraqi people. Hard copies of *On Point: The United States Army in Iraqi Freedom* are available through regular Army publication channels, and an online version can be viewed at <http://onpoint.leavenworth.army.mil>.

The book is not intended to be a definitive history of what exactly occurred during Operation Iraqi Freedom, but an overview, according to its three coauthors.

"Soldiers see what is in front of them, not the big picture (in battle)," said retired Colonel Gregory Fontenot, *On Point* coauthor. "We wanted to communicate clearly and effectively what happened. This is the story of America's Army."

And it is a story primarily intended for Soldiers and defense officials, with a secondary audience of family members, Fontenot said.

Borrowing on Saddam's threat of the "mother of all battles," Fontenot said they could have used one command's 650-slide "mother of all briefings" after-action report as the basis for their study, but most Soldiers would not endure reading nothing but dry facts.

The authors — Fontenot, Lieutenant Colonel E.J. Degen and Lieutenant Colonel David Tohn — said they purposely wrote the study as a story, not just dry history. They avoided heavy use of military jargon, he said. And they used vignettes and quotes from Soldiers throughout the

Central Command area of operations to highlight the study's discussion of what occurred.

In reviewing the deployment phase of the operations, the book describes plane loads of Soldiers arriving in theater, often with nobody in charge to meet them and the ensuing search in the dark as 300 Soldiers try to sort out which duffle bag belongs to who.

The Army does a good job of looking at and learning from its failures so that the same mistakes will not be made in the future, Degen said.

Fontenot said the authors realize that the study is one-sided as there is no balance of perspective by including enemy sources.

"We know this is not the perfect book, but it allows us to use it as a starting point on discussions of what occurred," Fontenot said.

And some of the study's insights have already impacted the way the Army currently trains. Tohn credited the study for the creation of an Iraqi village at the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, Louisiana, and a cluster of similar villages at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California.

The team collected more than 2,220 audio interviews, 1,500 video interviews, 236,000 documents, and 79,000 photos for the study in May and June 2003. That research material is archived at the Center of Army Lessons Learned, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, for future studies.

The first draft of the book went to Army senior leaders in August. Two drafts later, the book was approved for publication in December.



Specialist David Foley

## THE INFANTRYMAN COMES HOME

*Visitors to the Home of the Infantry this summer will once again be able to gaze with pride at the statue that has become a symbol of all those infantrymen who have committed themselves to creating and preserving this great nation. The Infantryman, as he is called, has been created anew and in bronze. The new figure will replace its predecessor, who has stood in front of Infantry Hall atop a stone and concrete pedestal erected in 1964. The earlier figure was constructed of polyester resin and bronze-impregnated epoxy over a steel frame, and had been moved only once, for cleaning and restoration in 1988.*

*The unveiling of the new Infantryman, timed to coincide with Fort Benning's Independence Day celebration and festivities on July 1, 2004, marks the beginning of a long tenure for this prominent symbol of the Infantry's proud heritage. The Infantryman is perhaps the most-photographed member of the Fort Benning community, and this is appropriate, considering the prominent role the U.S. Army infantry has played in our nation's history.*





The Bradley Master Gunner School is responsible for three courses. The first course is the **Bradley Fighting Vehicle (BFV) Master Gunner Course**, a 13-week course which teaches a master gunner candidate common corps critical master gunner tasks and maintenance information for ODS models and below. The second course is the **M2A3 BFV Master Gunner Course**, a five-week add on course which teaches a master gunner graduate additional specific requirements and maintenance information for the M2A3. The third course is the **Infantry Pre-Command Course-Bradley (IPCC-B)**, a one-week course associated with reintroducing field grade commanders and command sergeant majors to the BFV.

More information can be found on the school's website at [www.infantry.army.mil/29thInf/courses/bmg/index.htm](http://www.infantry.army.mil/29thInf/courses/bmg/index.htm).



### Master Gunner Train-up:

The Master Gunner Course cadre have developed an exportable CD to assist master gunners with candidate train-up. This master gunner job aid can be used in several applications in the field with BFV crew sustainment training as well. Due to the size of this CD, we are unable to make it available on our web page; however, it has been distributed to master gunners in each major command. If for some reason you are unable to get a copy of the disk through your unit's master gunner channels, you may contact the Master Gunner Branch through e-mail at [mastergunneroperations@benning.army.mil](mailto:mastergunneroperations@benning.army.mil). Remember, you must be a graduate of the BFV MG course to receive this disk.

### BFV Master Gunner Course (010-ASIJ3)

The purpose of the Master Gunner Course is to train noncommissioned officers in the rank of SGT(P) through SFC (11M, 12B, 13F, 14R, 19D and 03 USMC) to design and implement BFV gunnery and turret maintenance training programs.

#### Performance Outcome

- Maintenance and maintenance management of all Turret weapons systems and components.
- Establishment and conduct of BTI - XII.
- Development of a short-range training program for a battalion-size BFV unit from preliminary gunnery through platoon gunnery (BT XII).
- Turret gun system malfunction and troubleshooting management of COFT training programs (senior/instructor operator).

#### Prerequisites

- SGT(P) thru SFC 11B, 11M, 12B, 13F, 14R, 19D w/D3 ASI or 03 (USMC).
- Certified on BGST within the last 6 months.
- Meet height and weight standards IAW AR 600-9 upon arrival.
- Meet APFT standards IAW FM 21-20 upon arrival.
- IO certified/recertified within the last year. To include the

Bradley Advanced Matrix.

- Division BCE certified and recertified within 3 months of attendance of the course.
- BNCOC Graduate (**waiverable by the BDE Commander**).
- Bradley Table VIII qualified from either the BC's or Gunner's position meeting the following criteria: (**Waiverable for MOS 12Bs only**)
  - AC within the last 9 months.
  - NG within the last 12 months.
  - RC within the last 18 months.

MOS 12B Alternate Requirement in lieu of BT VIII. Students who are waiving the BT VIII prerequisite, due to resource constraints, will be required to fire the Bradley Advanced matrix (BAM) exercise 204 and receive a rating of "P" as a crewmember (Gunner or Commander) in the Unit of Fire Trainer (UCOFT) prior to attending the Bradley MG Course. They will also be required to bring a printout of their BAM 204 session summary reflecting the passing score and a memorandum signed by the first O-5 in their chain of command requesting waiver based on alternate requirement completion.

### M2A3 BFV Master Gunner Course (010-F24)

This course trains selected NCOs to assist unit leaders in the planning and implementation of digital gunnery training programs and maintenance training (turret and fire control) in digital force units that have been or will be equipped with M2A3 BFVs.

#### Information

This course is for master gunners who will be holding positions as master gunners in M2A3 equipped units. The course is five weeks in length and will generally be scheduled to begin the first Monday following the completion of the prerequisite 010-ASIJ3 course. NCOs who have previously attended the prerequisite Master Gunner Course and are already in A3 units will be afforded the opportunity to attend and receive the A3 add-on training.

### Bradley Pre-Command Course (010-F21)

This course is designed to reintroduce field grade commanders and CSMs to the training, maintenance and training device systems for the BFV. The course is attended by those officers designated to command BFV units and by those CSMs to be assigned to BFV units.

#### Prerequisites

- Active Army field grade officers who have been designated by Department of the Army to assume command of a BFV unit.
- Reserve Component field grade officers who are commanding or have been designated to assume command of a BFV unit.
- Active Army CSMs who have been designated to assume the position of CSMs in BFV units.
- Reserve Component CSMs who are presently serving as CSMs of BFV units or have been designated to assume the position of CSMs of BFV units.



# RANGER TRAINING BRIGADE NOTES

## Teams Compete for Best Ranger Title

The 21st annual David E. Grange, Jr. Best Ranger Competition was held April 23-26 at Fort Benning, Georgia.

This year, two teams from the 75th Ranger Regiment took the top two spots of the 60-hour nonstop competition. Staff Sergeants Colin Boley and Adam Nash edged out Sergeant First Class Matthew Wilson and Staff Sergeant John Sheaffer for first place.

In 1982, Lieutenant General David E. Grange, Jr., initiated the best ranger competition with the intent of having the finest Ranger buddy teams in the Army compete against each other in an extreme test of endurance and stamina.

I think the initial concept of this competition was to pull the best two men from an infantry squad or platoon, give them a maximum of two weeks to prepare, and then put them into the gauntlet of this nearly three-day event. The fact is that SSG Boley from the 75th Ranger Regiment did just that. Boley had only just returned from Afghanistan days before he was asked to compete and less than 10 days before the killer competition. That is true warrior and Ranger spirit.

This competition, like all other best ranger competitions, was different from previous years' events. It started like most with a PT test. Instead of one set of push-ups and sit-ups and a two-mile run, these competitor's had to compete two sets of push-ups and sit-ups (two minutes each set), and an unknown distance run of 8.4 miles. The unknown distance run set the stage for a grueling first day. The days continued with these following events:

### Day 1

PT tests, unknown distance run (8.4 m), moving target range, spot jump, litter carry, canoe race, and a road march. Of the first day's events the event that is, without a doubt, the defining eliminator of teams is the road march. Prior to the road march, the two events that led to the destruction and breakdown of many teams were the unknown distance run and the litter carry.

### Day 2

One of the Ranger mottos is "Not for the weak or faint hearted." Right after the road march, competitors went into night stakes with no sleep. Night stakes consisted of call for fire, vehicle recognition, radio operation, call for nine-line medevac, and demolition tasks. At approximately 0700 of Day 2, the Rangers started day stakes. Day stakes consisted of the Prusik Climb, 292 antenna, weapon assembly, two mystery events (hatchet throw/bow and arrow shoot and stress fire), M18A1 claymore, and knot test. New this year in day stakes was the timed stress shoot, which involved a 1.5-mile run, sewer tunnel navigation, M4 shoot transitioning to 9mm pistol to an M203. Any competitor can tell you the hardest minute of Best Ranger is the vertical climb with the Prusik stirrups to the top of the 70-foot rappel tower.

The Rangers went straight from day stakes into the night orienteering course from Camp Rogers to Camp Darby where they attempted to find 12 points. The orienteering course, like the road march the day before, was the killer task. It is lonely out in the dark woods and easy to just quit.

The teams finished up Day 2 at about 0700 when they arrived at Camp Darby for only one reason — to go through the longest mile on Fort Benning, the Darby Queen obstacle course.

### Day 3

The Darby Queen has 26 obstacles and is 1,000 meters long, most of which seems uphill. The teams then trucked out to Victory Pond for the water confidence course consisting of the log walk, rope drop and suspension traverse. After making a poncho raft with their equipment, the teams helocasted into the water and swam half way across the pond. The final event was the three-mile buddy run to the finish line.

This year's event started with 19 teams and finished with only eight. Seven teams fell out during the road march and four others left sometime late Saturday during the orienteering course. Just to finish the

best ranger competition is deemed a success, and the competition cannot be compared to any other event in the world. It tests the intestinal fortitude of the best warriors in the Army. SSG Boley's example of fitness and skill straight from the ranks is exceptional. It should not be the exception but the rule. Rangers are and must be ready every day of the year not just on April 23.

Rangers lead the way!

— CSM Douglas M. Greenway  
Ranger Training Brigade  
Command Sergeant Major

## 2004 Best Ranger Competition Results

**1st place** - Staff Sergeants  
Colin Boley and Adam Nash,  
75th Ranger Regiment

**2nd place** - Sergeant First Class  
Matthew D. Wilson and  
Staff Sergeant John Sheaffer,  
75th Ranger Regiment

**3rd place** -  
Captain Corbett F. McCallum and  
Staff Sergeant Jeffrey D. Lewis,  
4th Ranger Training Battalion

**4th place** - Staff Sergeants Eric  
Buonopane and Robert Ossman,  
5th Ranger Training Battalion

**5th place** - Captains John S. Serafini  
and Paul W. Staeheli,  
Joint Security Area, Korea

**6th place** - Captains David Bragg and  
Brian Hoffman,  
U.S. Army Maneuvers Center

**7th place** - Sergeants First Class  
Brent Myers and William Langham,  
5th Ranger Training Battalion

**8th place** -  
Captain Kevin M. O'Connor and  
Staff Sergeant Joshua K. Carswell,  
4th Ranger Training Battalion





Private First Class Eliamar Castanon

*The top two teams cross the finish line of the final event, the Buddy Run. From left to right are Sergeant First Class Matthew D. Wilson, Staff Sergeant John Sheaffer, Staff Sergeant Colin Boley, and Staff Sergeant Adam Nash, all of the 75th Ranger Regiment.*



Photos by Bridgett Siter

*Top, Captain David Bragg of the U.S. Army Maneuvers Center, completes the water confidence portion of the Best Ranger Competition. At right, Captain John Serafini navigates the Darby Queen obstacle course during the final day of competition.*



Specialist Nikki St. Amant

*Staff Sergeant Joshna Carswell leads the way during the litter carry event. Carswell and teammate Captain Kevin O'Connor finished eighth.*



# PROFESSIONAL FORUM



## Counter-Mortar Operations in the Sunni Triangle

MAJOR DARRON L. WRIGHT  
CAPTAIN ALEXANDER G. WILLIAMS

*"And as water has no constant form there are in war no constant conditions."*

— Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

The "Fighting Eagles" of the 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry (Mechanized) implemented an effective tactic, technique, and procedure (TTP) for conducting counter-mortar operations in Iraq. (The battalion was deployed as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom from April 2003 until April 2004.) Aside from improvised explosive devices (IEDs), mortars have been the weapon of choice for Iraqi insurgents attempting to attack fixed locations such as unit forward operating bases (FOBs) and larger bases such as logistical support areas (LSAs). These areas have the greatest troop concentration and offer the enemy the greatest probability of producing coalition casualties. Additionally, these weapons provide stand off and offer the enemy the greatest chance of avoiding destruction or capture.

### THREAT OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Mortars and improvised rockets have become ideal weapons in the "Sunni Triangle" for enemy insurgents conducting guerilla-style attacks against fixed sites such as FOBs and LSAs. These weapons allow the enemy to conduct missions with limited direct contact. This allows for greater survivability, and increasing the chance for these small enemy elements to inflict casualties, damage equipment, and affect morale. Since the beginning of the campaign, enemy attacks on fixed sites have evolved from direct fire

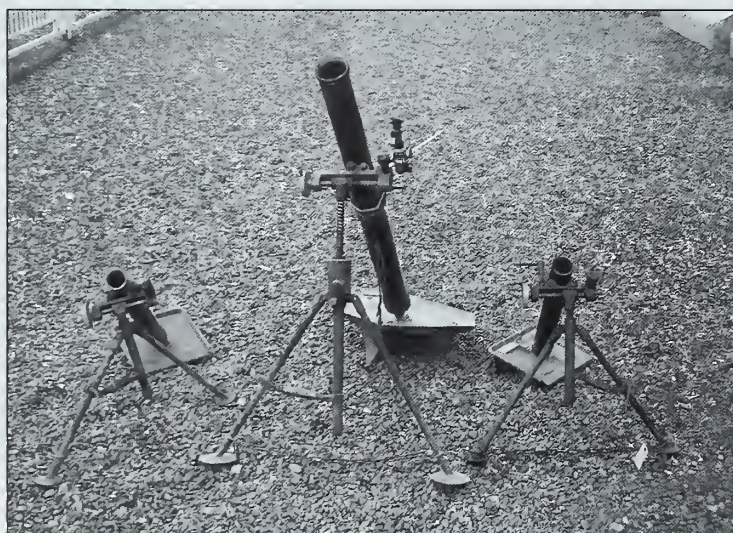
attacks (which place the enemy in immediate danger of death) involving anything from rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) and mortars to rockets. Enemy direct fire attacks against FOBs and LSAs made little tactical sense for the enemy, as they almost always had comrades killed in the engagements.

In the early stages of "post-war" Iraq, between June and August 2003, enemy mortar cells would fire approximately four to six mortar rounds, cache the weapon system, and then flee the area. This technique was most common with the 120mm mortar system. This enemy technique was ineffective because friendly forces would maneuver to the point of origin (POO), based on Q-36/37 radar acquisition, and conduct a detailed search within a 500-meter radius of the area using mine/metal detectors. In most cases the mortar tube along with cached rounds were discovered and seized within this 500-meter radius. Our unit was able to seize more than 60 mortar systems along with hundreds of cached mortar rounds over a three-month period.

From August to February 2004, the enemy quickly recognized that they were running out of mortar systems and adapted their TTPs to keep the mortar systems they used. First, they began to

favor lighter mortar systems (primarily 82mm) since they are easier to carry and emplace. Second, they began firing only two to four rounds from high-speed access trails. And third, the enemy would load the mortar system in the back of a truck (covering it with fruit or grass) and depart the area of operation (AO) using routes that would egress away from friendly units moving to the POO.

The enemy's mortar systems include 60mm, 82mm, and 120mm. These systems are very effective if the enemy is allowed to fire



*60mm and 82mm mortar systems were among the weapons systems captured from enemy insurgents in Iraq.*



from the same general points of origin without interdiction or repercussion by coalition forces. If the enemy is allowed to use a given area without friendly counterfire being returned, it affords them the chance to correct their firing data (elevation and deflection) and essentially allows them to register against specific fixed sites. Also, not shooting counterfire only emboldens the enemy to fire more rounds during an attack, with increasing accuracy. Over a short period of time the enemy can have the fixed site "dialed in" and will fire mortars with deadly accuracy at every given opportunity.

In addition to the evolution of mortar sophistication, the enemy began using stolen rockets (seized from existing ammo storage sites during the early days of the war) to fire at friendly larger fixed sites (such as LSAs). The enemy does not possess the system or launchers to fire these rockets and have been forced to develop improvised techniques to effectively fire them. The technique most commonly used is to place the rocket on a slope such as a dried canal, oriented towards the selected target. The angle of the round placed on the slope determines the range. The next step is to prime the round with PV-2 (equivalent to C-4), emplace a time fuse, and detonate the round. Although the enemy cannot accurately aim the system for



Courtesy photo

*Numerous improvised rockets were also found in Iraq. Many had been prepared for firing and aimed at targets by insurgents.*

direct hits, they can still achieve their goal of inflicting mass casualties (as LSAs are enormous targets, spanning several kilometers). The rockets also serve as psychological weapons, used by an outmatched enemy to effectively weigh the balance of terror to their favor. Additionally, a successful rocket attack (an attack that launches and impacts in the vicinity of an LSA, and one in which the enemy egresses) emboldens the enemy to attempt future attacks.

Currently, the enemy continues to develop TTPs to fire mortars and rockets at FOBs and LSAs with impunity. A recent enemy trend (which allows the enemy to simply "prime and forget" their rocket systems) is to set an electronic timer to ignite the rockets hours after they are emplaced. Once the rocket is primed, the enemy departs the area, and then the multiple rockets ignite, firing at their intended targets. Enemy forces use mortars and rockets to attack locations where coalition forces are static, concentrated, and most importantly, where they live. It is imperative that units adapt TTPs for counter-mortar operations that are easy to execute and deny the enemy the use of these standoff weapon systems.

### COUNTER-MORTAR OPERATIONS

The most effective means for countering enemy mortar attacks is outlined below. This is the standard model used to kill/capture or prevent enemy mortar attacks. However, it should be recognized that every situation is METT-TC (mission, enemy, terrain and weather, time, troops available and civilian) dependent; this TTP has been tested and has proved very effective in the Sunni Triangle. The two steps addressed below are preliminary steps units must execute once it assumes its AO.

The first step is to conduct terrain analysis and develop a modified combined obstacle overlay (MCOO) which identifies areas most likely to be used as mortar/rocket firing points. Once identified, these areas become named areas of interest/target areas of interest (NAIs/TAIs) for observation and targets for counterfire. Additionally known firing points are targeted and the overlay is updated daily in targeting meetings.

Second step is to establish a series of

## Counter-Mortar Battle Drill

The steps below are actions taken upon receipt of incoming fire:

**Step 1:** TOC receives the acquisition or identifies the POO.

**Step 2:** TOC immediately clears the area for counterfire via

- FM Radio,
- FBCB2, and
- Alerts all units on POO location.

**Step 3:** Counterfire conducted using all assets, 155mm and 120mm mortar systems, additionally mortars or artillery fire a mix of high explosive (HE) & white phosphorous (WP). The WP serves as a marking round to assist aircraft & ground troops identifying the POO.

**Step 4:** Units begin maneuvering to establish "spider web" checkpoints in and around the POO.

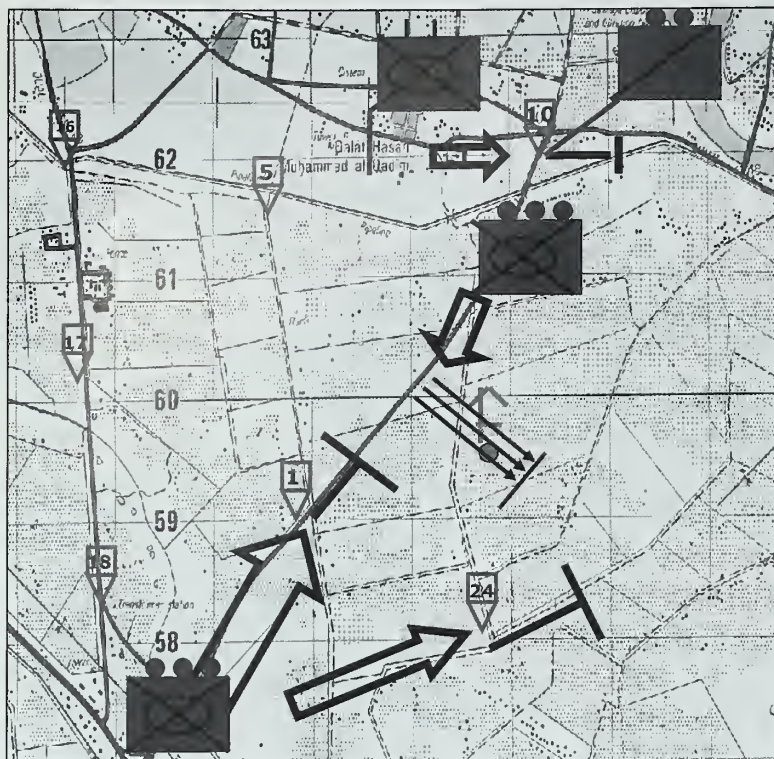
**Step 5:** Counterfire complete, aircraft and a designated unit moves directly to POO. Designated unit searches the POO and clears the area within a 500m radius and conducts Battle Damage Assessment for effects of counterfire. Additionally the unit translator questions locals and eye witnesses for information and intelligence.

**Step 6:** Simultaneously all traffic and personnel are stopped and searched at all the checkpoints for mortars and other contraband.

**Step 7:** Any intelligence gained is immediately disseminated to all units via FM.

**Step 8:** The area is targeted for future observation, counterfire, harassment & interdiction fires and CAS target.





Counter-Mortar Battle Drill

flash checkpoints in and around all known/templated firing points. The checkpoints are located on identified egress routes around the NAIs/TAIs. This serves as a play-card for unit's to execute once incoming fire is received. The S-3 assigns responsibility to companies for specific checkpoints. When incoming fire is received, the TOC alerts all units as to the location of the POO and units execute the checkpoint battle drill.

## RECENT OPERATIONS

The Fighting Eagles of 1-8 Infantry have executed numerous counter-mortar missions using the battle drill discussed. The key to success is to quickly acquire the acquisition grid, announce the grid, clear fires immediately, then fire counterfire within three to four minutes using all available indirect fire assets while simultaneously maneuvering ground forces to predetermined checkpoints. To aid in more responsive fires, it is best to have battalion mortars laid on priority targets. In most cases, the enemy will return to previous firing points to attack fixed locations. Most recently, our FOB was attacked with four incoming 120mm rounds. Within three minutes of acquisition, we returned fire with a battery three and more than 24 high explosive (HE) rounds from our 120mm mortar section.

Simultaneously while counterfire was taking place, units were moving to their designated checkpoints to establish the "spider web" to catch any fleeing attackers. Another unit was tasked to move and clear the POO. Upon arriving at the POO, a detailed search was conducted and a 120mm mortar, base plate, sight, and numerous rounds were discovered. Additionally, eight enemy personnel were detained. The keys to it all were immediate counterfire and units moving to isolate the target area. The battle

drill must be synchronized and battalion TOCs (i.e., battle captains) must know where all maneuver elements are located in order to rapidly clear fires. Additionally, units must rehearse the battle drill for establishing checkpoints, and the battalion mortar section must be registered and have current meteorological data for effective fires.

Another TTP that works well when searching POO is to fire WP in conjunction with HE rounds. The vegetation is very thick in central Iraq especially the areas along the banks of the Tigris River. The area is covered with thick orange groves and dense vegetation. The enemy uses the orchards to fire from in order to avoid detection from aircraft and local populace such as farmers in the area. Also it allows them to egress the area using available concealment to avoid capture. Firing WP in conjunction with HE rounds serves two purposes. First, it immediately marks an area and alerts aircraft and ground maneuver forces to the POO. Second, it burns a small area thus destroying the vegetation in the immediate area denying the enemy use of that firing point in the future. This technique is obviously METT-TC dependent as it is not the solution in all cases. Units must be cognizant of civilians in the area and other associated collateral damage that could result. The majority of our mortar attacks have come in the late afternoon when farmers have cleared their fields.

The techniques discussed have been tested, refined, and proven in war. They are not the end all; numerous internal and external factors and most importantly the "fog of war" have a major impact when executing tactical operations. However, it is a simple plan that should be known and rehearsed by all, and when executed properly has devastating effects on the enemy. The current operational environment in the "Sunni Triangle" is much like the environment we train and fight at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC). Tactics used there have been adapted, adjusted, and implemented here and have proven highly effective. Iraq is a noncontiguous battlefield dealing with an asymmetric threat. Attacks come from 360 degrees. Anyone at any time is subject to attack, and therefore everyone must be prepared to fight. Mortars and improvised rockets are the weapon of choice. The Fighting Eagles learned these lessons early on and developed the present counter-mortar battle drill.

The Sunni Triangle remains a volatile place. Former Baath Party loyalists and Fedayeen guerrillas continue to attack Coalition forces as opportunities present themselves. However, upon contact they are immediately met by overwhelming force and are destroyed. The key to success is to counter the enemy, no matter how small, with overwhelming force – therein lies the decisive point in this fight in Iraq.

**Major Darron L. Wright** is currently serving as the S3 for the 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry. He deployed with the unit during Operation Iraqi Freedom from April 2003 to April 2004. He is a 2002 graduate of the Naval War College. He was commissioned in 1988 from Kemper Military College in Booneville, Missouri.

**Captain Alexander G. Williams** is currently serving as the S2 for the 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry. He deployed with the unit for OIF from April 2003 to April 2004. He also previously served as both a rifle platoon leader and mortar platoon leader in the battalion.



# Words Matter

## Terms Used Incorrectly Can Cause Confusion

CAPTAIN MICHAEL DANE ACORD

*It's 0300. You, the platoon leader, are conducting a patrol when "BOOM!" An improvised explosive device (IED) has just exploded, followed by a direct fire contact from the building in front of you. The lead squad lays down a base of fire while the trail two squads bound. There is a lot of noise and firing. Additionally, the members of the lead squad in contact can't hear well due to the explosion. You move with the assault element. As you approach the objective, you radio the base of fire squad leader and ask him to "shift" fire. The squad leader yells, "shift fire," but due to the noise of battle and the pain of damaged eardrums, several members of his squad mistake this for "lift fire," the prearranged signal to stop firing. As a result, two members of the assault element are killed.*

What went wrong? What was their alternate signal? Did the base of fire confirm the signal? Could they see? Were they receiving effective fire? In my Infantry Captains Career Course (ICCC) Small Group, I would ask another question. Why did the platoon leader use "lift fire" versus "cease fire?" You might ask, why does that matter? Isn't that SOP? It may well be unit SOP, but it isn't doctrinally accurate.

### Words matter.

About every three years, we discuss the topic of "lift and shift fires." It has come to our attention, and we believe it is necessary to highlight some key definitions in our doctrine to clear up some fairly ingrained misconceptions in our doctrine.

Capstone doctrine, such as Field Manual (FM) 101-5-1, *Operational Terms and Symbols*, provides common language for all Army forces to use. As long as these terms are used correctly, there are few problems. However, when these terms are used incorrectly, or worse, when we don't know we are using the terms incorrectly, we run into problems.

Consider this story:

When dealing with someone who doesn't speak your language, you know immediately that there is a communication problem. But, a far worse situation is when you think you know what someone is saying, but they have a different meaning for their words. For example, my coworker's wife is British. She asks him to check under the "bonnet" and look in the "boot." When he starts to take off her hat and boots, she gets angry. When you inquire as to her embitterment, she says "on the car you idiot!" In Great Britain, the "bonnet" is a car hood, and the "boot" is the trunk. As you can see, it is far worse to have a communication problem and not know it.

### Words matter.

Cease fire is the correct term to use instead of lift fire. Shift, lift, and cease fire are defined in FM 101-5-1. FM 101-5-1 defines these terms in the following manner:

**Lift fire** — In direct fire, the command to raise the cone of fire so that the beaten zone strikes the target, but the space between the target and the firing weapons is safe for maneuver by friendly forces. See FMs 17-12 and 23-1.

**Shift fire** — The command to move the cone of fire in a direction away from a friendly maneuvering force so that enemy forces continue to be struck by the beaten zone at the same time the friendly unit moves. See FMs 6-series, 7-90, 7-91, 17-12, and 23-1.

**Cease fire** (JP 1-02) — A command given to air defense artillery units to refrain from firing on, but to continue to track, an airborne object. Missiles already in flight will be permitted to continue to intercept. (Army) A command

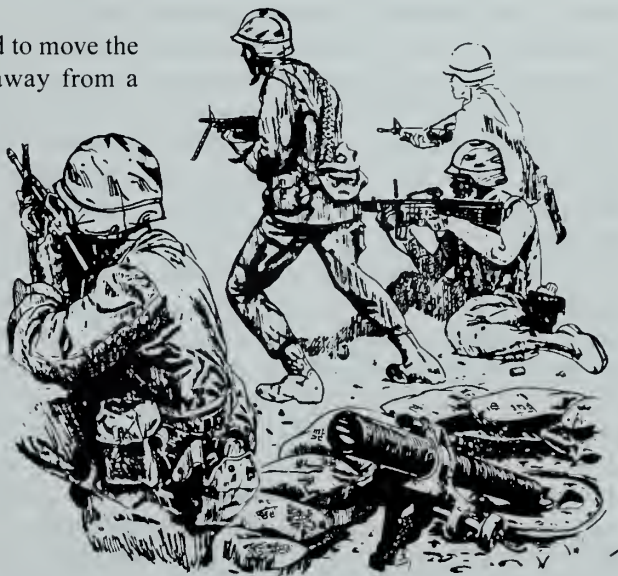
given to any unit or individual firing any weapon to stop engaging the target. (See also call for fire, fire command, and fire mission.) See FMs 6-20, 7-8, 7-90, 17-12, 23-1, and 44-100.

You might say, FM 101-5-1 is a "higher" manual and doesn't apply to me. Let's look then at how FM 7-8 describes them:

**STEP 4. Attack.** (From FM 7-8 dtd. 1992 page 4-9.)

If the squad(s) in contact together with the machine gun(s) can suppress the enemy, the platoon leader determines if the remaining squad(s) not in contact can maneuver. He assesses the following:

- Location of enemy positions and obstacles;
  - Size of enemy force engaging the squad; (The number of enemy automatic weapons, the presence of any vehicles, and the employment of indirect fires are indicators of enemy strength.)
  - Vulnerable flank; and
  - Covered and concealed flanking route to the enemy position.
- a. If the answer is **YES** (he can



maneuver), the platoon leader maneuvers the squad(s) into the assault:

(1) Once the platoon leader has ensured that the base-of-fire element is in position and providing suppressive fires, he leads the assaulting squad(s) to the assault position.

(2) Once in position, the platoon leader gives the prearranged signal for the base-of-fire element to lift or shift direct fires to the opposite flank of the enemy position.

FM 7-8 uses both terms with “or” separating them. To me, this means that leaders can choose to continue to engage targets in a safe manner beyond the objective I see “lift fires” having application primarily in urban fire control.

The confusion stems from Training Circular (TC) 7-9. Unfortunately, FM 101-5-1 is the proponent for those terms and is what is correct, regardless of what we may have learned incorrectly. A training circular is not authoritative.

#### 6-2. OBJECTIVES (From TC 7-9 [mistake])

Platoon training has many objectives. These include:

- Reinforcement of principles of command and control.

- Reinforcement of concepts of supporting fire, base of fire, and synchronization of fires.

- Reinforcement of concepts of starting, stopping, and lifting and shifting fires. (Everyone must know [through training and rehearsals] the signal for lift or shift. Lift simply means to cease fire. Shifting is more complex. It can mean shifting from one section of the objective to an adjacent section, or it can denote a total shift from the objective to an adjacent area. Additional coordination and a timed sequence of events [matrix] can apply in certain missions such as a deliberate attack.)

- Concentration on maneuver (to include security), fire control measures, and fire discipline.

You might say, this is semantics and not important. Let’s look at some more practical reasons. “Shift” sounds a lot like “lift” and could be confusing during noisy combat operations. In training, we use “cease” fire on the range. Therefore, it makes sense to use what every Soldier uses from the beginning of his career to the end.

Our doctrine establishes the standards for our training. If we allow our doctrine to become irrelevant, then our training and future combat capabilities will degrade. We have a responsibility as combined arms leaders to use doctrinal rigor in our training. Without these standards, our training will become less effective.

---

At the time the article was written, **Captain Michael Dane Acord** was serving as small group instructor for the Infantry Captains Career Course at Fort Benning, Georgia.

---

# Why Organic Fires?

COLONEL ROBERT F. BARRY II

**Editor’s Note:** *This article first appeared in the March-June 2004 issue of Field Artillery magazine.*

The Army’s purpose is to fight and win the nation’s wars, according to the “Army Strategic Planning Guidance 2006-2023.” As the source of trained and ready land forces of decisive action across the spectrum of conflict, the Army provides the joint force commander (JFC) the ability to coerce enemies, control resources and populations, and decisively conclude conflicts on terms and a timeline favorable to U.S. national interests.

If we believe war is an act of force to compel the enemy to do our will, then to win our nation’s wars, we must leave the enemy no choice but to accede to our demands. By persistent close combat and, if necessary, occupation of the enemy’s territory and key facilities, ground forces compel him to accede.

The enemy must face a persistent state of disadvantage, and friendly ground forces must be able to escalate the disadvantages of his continued resistance *quickly*. Responsive, adjustable, scalable and precise fire support is a key enabler in creating persistent disadvantage. These adjectives describe fires organic to the ground force.

*Joint Publication 1-02 DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* defines “organic” as “assigned to and forming an essential part of a military organization.” Building on that definition, for purposes of this article, “organic” refers to maintaining a balance of indirect fires assets



U.S. Army photo

*When ground forces are in close combat, responsiveness will never be irrelevant — and the most responsive fires, today and in the future will remain those organic to the force.*



as part of the ground force, in general, to preclude the force from having to rely too heavily on other joint fires assets that cannot provide the required responsiveness, force protection or variety of effects that organic assets can. There also have been discussions about field artillery's being "organic," or under the command and control of, say, a maneuver brigade — organizationally, much the same as the howitzer battery in each squadron of an armored cavalry regiment.

This article focuses on the joint balancing of fires assets organic to the ground force and leaves the other Army debate about the actual organization and command and control of those assets within the ground force to another article.

For the foreseeable future, only mortars, cannons, and rockets organized and distributed on the battlefield along side maneuver forces can provide ground commanders responsive, all-weather, 24/7 fire support to close with and destroy the enemy. Organic fire support assets allow the ground force commander to synchronize his fires with his maneuver to destroy, neutralize, or suppress enemy forces before contact or during the fight. This enabling relationship between ground-based fires and maneuver speeds the destruction of enemy forces and preserves friendly combat power.

The compelling nature of close combat is a keystone of U.S. Army doctrine. According to Field Manual 3.0, *Operations*, close combat has but one purpose: "to decide the outcome of battles and engagements." Defeating or destroying enemy forces and seizing terrain are what decide the outcome of battles — fire and maneuver. The Army leadership historically has recognized the absolute necessity for ground force commanders to have responsive artillery fires available to them — as integral to their success — and task organized or mission tailored the force to ensure those fires were available.

#### **The Debate: Organic Fires or Not**

Today many are debating whether or not commanders need organic fire support assets. Much of this debate is fueled by the success of and continued improvements in technology, which leads some to point out the tremendous savings in resources that

could be garnered by reducing what some consider to be redundant fires assets.

Some argue that because technology is providing precise intelligence, targeting and weapons, we don't need the area fire capabilities and the variety of ammunition effects that organic cannon and rocket artillery bring to the fight. They argue that precision will give us surgical one-shot/one-kill capabilities with target location so precise and situational awareness (SA) so complete that suppression won't be necessary.

They also argue that responsiveness, typically a strength of organic artillery, will be irrelevant because the joint fires network will allow all sensors equal access to all shooters. Their logic is that responsiveness is not a function of what indirect fires at each echelon bring to the fight, but rather a function of the network and the availability of joint assets. The logic continues that, because we always will be able to achieve air superiority, a large portion of these joint fires assets can be air platforms, reducing the need for organic indirect fire assets in the ground force. Those assets that the ground force retains might be something akin to the non-line-of sight-launcher system (NLOS-LS) because the force won't need area fires.

The argument goes that, surely, improvements in command and control, communications, computers, and intelligence (C4I) give commanders such unprecedented access to information and sophisticated synchronization capabilities that they virtually are assured of dominating any battlefield without organic fires.

Are they right? In each of these arguments there is some truth. Technology



U. S. Army photo

*Sergeant Elijah Caddy of the 2nd Battalion, 319th Field Artillery Regiment, uses a panoramic telescope during a test fire at Baghdad International Airport in Iraq.*

is impressive, and we need to continue to enhance our knowledge of the battlefield and precision strike capabilities. But we will never achieve perfect knowledge as long as humans wage war and the enemy "has a vote" on his actions — the enemy *always* has a vote, even if only to decide whether or not to surrender or die in a spider hole. The maneuver commander needs — and will continue to need — the options of precise area fires to neutralize and suppress the enemy, especially against a dispersed, dismounted enemy, such as in Afghanistan.

When ground forces are in close combat, responsiveness will never be irrelevant — and the most responsive fires, today and in the future, will remain those organic to the force.

Without a doubt, the ground force never should leave home without fixed-wing support, and the fire supporters' mission is to tap the right joint fires platform to provide the right effects to achieve the JFC's intent, including assets. But these very capable air platforms have, creating gaps that organic cannons and multiple-launch rocket systems (MLRS) fill as joint fires options.



### Mitigating the Uncertainty of War — Now and in the Future

How does the ground force mitigate information gaps, the inability to target the enemy and indecision? One way is to employ organic fires to suppress and neutralize targets. Organic fires provide both a hedge against uncertainty and a *scalable* method for refining fires as commanders refine their targeting data.

As the Army transforms to meet the challenges of future combat, one of the driving principles is information dominance. Information dominance will enable commanders to achieve the “quality of firsts” necessary for success, as outlined in the “Unit of Action Operational and Organizational Plan” (UA O&O). Network management, information assurance and operational net assessment (ONA) will enable commanders to create a common operational picture (COP) for shared SA, gain positional advantage, and conduct precision maneuver and precision attacks against the enemy. Information dominance will allow commanders at all levels to translate their superior perspective into actionable decisions within the context of a COP and shared intent. Information dominance and enhanced connectivity will bring superior effectiveness and survivability with a lighter and smaller force.

This new tactical paradigm enables the Army to restructure tactical echelons, design new combat systems and develop new tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) for the Future Force. As it develops new combat forces, the Army is shedding old ways of thinking and old concepts of warfare in favor of lighter, more lethal and more expeditionary organizations.

As a result, lighter more deployable future combat system (FCS) vehicles will replace heavily armored vehicles. We no longer will need to mass formations to achieve overwhelming combat power. Instead, irregular battlefield geometry and distributed operations that strike throughout the depth of enemy formations will defeat the enemy and disintegrate his forces.

Future Force organizations, such as the UA, will employ combined arms battalions capable of autonomous operations. The new tactical paradigm specifies that these battalions be able to operate in a noncontiguous battlespace. Commanders will minimize the need for reserves by using information dominance to anticipate, plan for and quickly react to changing battlefield dynamics. Each of these changes is based on a belief in the power of information dominance.

The ability to acquire and use information is supplanting heretofore-accepted risk mitigators, such as mass and armor protection. Armor protection is a hedge against the uncertainty of the type, location and capabilities of the enemy’s weapons. Massed formations mitigate the uncertainty of command and control and faulty planning by placing forces close to, or in direct support of, decisive points on the battlefield. The ultimate hedge against uncertainty has been the reserve, whose size is inversely proportional to the amount of knowledge one has about the enemy.

**Future Force  
organizations, such as  
the UA, will employ  
combined arms  
battalions capable of  
autonomous operations.  
The new tactical  
paradigm specifies that  
these battalions be able  
to operate in a non-  
contiguous battlespace.**

Based on the commander’s greater reliance on information, each of these hedges is being replaced or reduced in the Future Force. This simultaneously reduces the commander’s ability to react to unforeseen circumstances. Organic fire support is the ground commander’s last hedge against uncertainty and a critical component of the future operational concept.

Regardless of the very powerful capabilities of information dominance — the ability to help the commander make timely decisions, deduce enemy strengths and vulnerabilities, and provide important components for retaining the initiative — the fog and friction of war will remain, now and in the future. We must ensure commanders have responsive,

readily available combat power to deal with them.

Military operations ongoing in Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) have demonstrated that, while we may have information superiority, there is still much we do not and will not know about the elusive enemy because we never will have perfect information. Perfect information implies that we understand not only the enemy’s capabilities, but also his *intentions*. This is clearly a difficult task to execute with regularity.

During Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan in March 2002, intense reconnaissance efforts before the battle focused every available surveillance and target acquisition asset on a 10-by-10-kilometer area surrounding suspected Al Qaeda locations. In spite of this massive intelligence effort, less than 50 percent of the Al Qaeda positions identified in the course of the battle were discovered before ground contact. (Statistic taken from “Afghanistan and the Future of Warfare,” a U.S. Army War College Study by Stephen Biddle, 2 November 2002.) As reported by several studies and interviews with participants, most enemy fires in Operation Anaconda came from initially unseen, unsuspected Al Qaeda fighting positions.

Despite the best technology available that was focused intensely on a limited area, a technologically unsophisticated enemy was able to hide from U.S. forces until they made ground contact. This demonstrates that if the enemy knows how we are looking for him, then he can devise a means to conceal himself.

This detracts from the detail and accuracy of information available to the friendly ground commander, precluding or inhibiting his use of precision munitions in advance of ground contact. His preparatory fires must be on area targets while he relies more on developing targets in contact, which requires immediately *responsive* and *scalable* fires.

Similar incidents occurred in Iraq during the attack to Baghdad and continue today. There is little evidence to suggest that precision and information were solely responsible for the success of Coalition Forces in OIF. Our success in OIF, in fact, was due to the superb application of the elements of combat power: maneuver, firepower, leadership, protection and information (FM 3.0).

There were multiple instances of unplanned contact with Iraqi



forces, suggesting that fog, friction and uncertainty are still key elements of the battlefield. Massed combat power and armor protection allowed commanders to overcome the information shortfalls while minimizing Coalition casualties. Indeed, the successful effects of precision weapons and information superiority were critically dependent on Iraqi ineptitude. Against a less exposed, better-prepared opponent, the results may have been different. (Information taken from the 18 August 2003 War College study, "Iraq



Corporal Brent Walker, USMC

*The only other U.S. service ground force in OIF, the I Marine Expeditionary Force, also relied heavily on its organic artillery. Its artillery task force, the 11th Marine Regiment, "engaged the enemy in every battle in the campaign."*

and the Future of Warfare: Implications for Army and Defense Policy" by Dr. Stephen Bibble.) As we observe the less capable but resolute opponents in Iraq, one can conclude that our expectations for attaining the information dominance required for full-spectrum operations may be optimistic. This is not an indictment of the new tactical paradigm or Army transformation, but, rather, it is recognition that there always will be uncertainty in military operations. Reducing uncertainty through better information management, better and more numerous sensors, and collaborative planning and execution are worthy goals, but those improvements will not *eliminate* the friction of war.

Some argue that more information makes us more, not less, uncertain. The "staring eye" of improved surveillance only will realize its full potential when our analytical tools reach similar levels of sophistication. Even then, the UA O&O acknowledges there will be times when tactical surprise is lost or the enemy does something unexpected. The ground maneuver commander needs his organic fires for just such times.

#### Characteristics of Organic Fires

The application of fires in support of the

tactical maneuver commander in close combat requires a delivery system that is immediately responsive and accurate, but adjustable, a system that can achieve a sustained high volume of fire, employ a full suite of munitions and effects, and can do so in all weather, all types of terrain and day or night. As characteristic of cannon and MLRS fires, these capabilities allow the ground commander the freedom to maneuver his forces out of contact while setting the conditions for his next fight — allow him the flexibility to adapt to overcome the actions of an interactive, thinking enemy. On-call organic fire support brings the simultaneity of effects in close combat needed to overwhelm a resolute adversary.

• *Organic fire support is always available to the ground commander and responds to his priorities.* Unlike other fire support assets, the Soldiers who man cannons and mortars are always present and frequently talk face-to-face with their unit and the commander they support. Rock drills, rehearsals and habitual relationships enable a high degree of flexibility, allowing the commander wider latitude in executing fragmentary orders or contingency plans. In contrast, naval gunfire platforms, for example, may not be

able to range the land force deep inland or may be forced by a submarine or air threat to move away and be out of range. When a ground commander is fighting in close combat, aircraft may be called to support a higher priority target or prevented from attacking ground force targets by weather or the enemy's air defense artillery (ADA) or aircraft.

During OIF, the ground forces moving toward Baghdad were in the Mother of All Sandstorms that had 100-meter visibility and winds gusting up to 50 knots with thousands of Iraqi paramilitary in the

area for *three* days — 24 to 27 March. About organic fires assets, Lieutenant General W. Scott Wallace, the Commanding General of V Corps in OIF, said that "during that dense sandstorm, indirect fires proved most valuable. We used the lethal effects of artillery and mortars with some degree of precision, in particular HE [high-explosive area fire munitions] artillery" (interview with General Wallace, "Trained, Adaptable, Flexible Forces Victory in Iraq," *Field Artillery* magazine September-October 2003).

His assessment was echoed by Brigadier General (Promotable) Lloyd J. Austin III, the Assistant Division Commander for Maneuver in the 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized) during OIF. General Austin said, "Ground-based indirect fires were absolutely critical during the Mother of All Sandstorms" (interview with General Austin, "3rd ID in OIF: Fires for the Distributed Battlefield," *Field Artillery* magazine September-October 2003).

The only other U.S. service ground force in OIF, the I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF), also relied heavily on its organic artillery. Its artillery task force, the 11th Marine Regiment, "engaged the enemy in every battle in the campaign. No other regiment can make that claim. The 11th



Marines processed more than 1,900 radar missions and fired 19,883 rounds [in OIF].” (Quotes taken from the article “Cannon Cockers at War: The 11th Marines in Operation Iraqi Freedom” by Lieutenant Colonel Michael R. Melillo, USMC, *Field Artillery* magazine September- October 2003.)

In 1973, the Israelis made the almost fatal mistake of relying too heavily on air assets for fires, assets that were soon attrited. For the first eight days of that Arab-Israeli conflict, Arab air forces and ADA neutralized the Israeli Air Force. It almost cost the Israelis the war and caused them to reenergize their cannon and mortar programs to provide organic capabilities to their ground forces.

In a similar vein during the Falkland Island conflict, the British found their sea-based forces (upon which the British were relying for fires) seriously threatened by Argentine land-based aircraft. In both these conflicts, significant threats to the joint fires assets caused profound adjustments to ground force operations and an increase in demand for organic fires assets.

• *Organic fire support assets can bring fires in close to friendlies — closer than other joint fires assets.* The maneuver commander requires this ability to support his troops in contact. For example, a 500-pound or larger bomb simply has too large a bursting radius for friendly forces in close contact. Close air support (CAS) is difficult business and requires positive control over the attack. An aircraft at 10,000 feet or a fighter on the deck at high speeds attacking a moving enemy in close contact with friendlies leaves little room for error. At that altitude or speed, the adversary is often able to fool the attacker with decoys and the opportunity for fratricide is greatly increased.

Cannon-delivered general-purpose munitions may be adjusted to within 300 meters of friendly forces. Precision munitions, such as the Excalibur family of munitions and other sensor-fused and laser-guided projectiles, are also very lethal and even more accurate. From the joint perspective, improved munitions launched from ground-based fire support platforms will reduce the latency in joint attacks by giving the commander more options for precision attack.

• *Organic fires assets respond to the needs of the supported commander within his decision cycle and easily can be re-targeted or re-prioritized to adjust to the changing nature of the battle.* Organic fires assets minimize the clearance- of-fires procedures and airspace coordination required when assets are not habitually part of the ground commander’s forces. The additional coordination adds time and, thus, decreases responsiveness. Fixed-wing aircraft, while very efficient in providing fires that set the stage for future fights, are less capable of supporting the maneuver commander in contact.

The maneuver commander plans his fires to be integrated and synchronized fully with his scheme of maneuver. However, the adversary strives to adapt and the fight seldom unfolds exactly as planned. As the tactical situation changes and the commander employs and adjusts fires to adapt and react to these changes, he needs systems and procedures that can react in seconds. Fixed-wing assets are simply not that responsive in attacking unplanned targets.

A close fight is timed in minutes, and the ground force’s ability to finish decisively is, in large measure, based on its ability to rapidly shift and focus overwhelming firepower at a decisive point, something that may occur more than once in the same battle. Even if aircraft are on station and weaponed correctly (have the right munitions for the desired effects), the weather is acceptable, direct communications are established with the attacking aircraft and something is available to mark the target (often artillery-delivered smoke), the coordination necessary for effective employment is time-consuming.

Although CAS employment timelines vary based on the proficiency and availability of aircraft and observers, in the vast majority of combat scenarios, it takes longer to coordinate and employ CAS than ground-based indirect fire systems. Direct support battalion cannon fires typically are available within 60 seconds of the call-for-fire in all weather, day or night and are not limited by time-on-station or weapons mixes onboard.

In OIF, with thousands of designated no-fire areas (NFAs), it only took about six and one half minutes from the time the Firefinder radar acquired the target through the battle drill to clear the fires for NFAs and friendly forces and vet them for the rules of engagement (ROE) until the cannons or MLRS fired. Of the 91 counterfire missions the 3rd ID fired in 21 days of combat, artillery fires were the most effective — even when the effects of fixed-wing assets were preferred — because accessing the fixed-wing assets took too long ( “Acquisition!” 3rd ID in Counterfire in OIF” by Chief Warrant Officer Three Brian L. Borer and Lieutenant Colonel Noel T. Nicolle, *Field Artillery* magazine September-October 2003).

Although it is true that improved joint interoperability of air-ground systems will increase the responsiveness of air power significantly, overall, fixed-wing assets will not be as responsive to the ground force



Master Sergeant Terry L. Blevins, USAF

*Fixed-wing aircraft, while very efficient in providing fires that set the stage for future fights, are less capable of supporting the maneuver commander in contact.*



commander as his organic fires assets.

- *Organic fire support assets have the ability to provide the right amount of precision, ranging from near pinpoint accuracy to target area coverage.* This precision allows the commander to apply fires to fit the tactical situation, target location/identification capabilities and limits imposed by proximity to friendly forces or noncombatants. Organic fires precision is scalable and achievable within the time limits demanded by close combat situations.

In OIF during the “mother of all” sandstorms, the 3rd ID’s cavalry squadron, 3-7 Cav, found itself embroiled with suicidal enemy forces while running low on ammunition. Unable to break contact with the resolute fighters, the Cav called for fires. Air Force B-52s circled above the sandstorm and dropped ordnance some distance from the four sides of the stalled 3-7 Cav, helping to prevent additional masses of the enemy from attacking the Cav.

The only joint asset in range that could fire in close support of the Cav was the 3rd ID’s organic MLRS, which fires dual-purpose improved conventional munition (DPICM) rockets with a large, deadly footprint. From nearly 30 kilometers away, MLRS fired a 12-rocket volley *precisely* 1,400 meters from 3-7 Cav. One volley did the job, allowing the Cav to disengage, and there were no friendly casualties from MLRS. Fortunately, the 3-7 Cav commander ensured his squadron was *always* within artillery range throughout OIF.

- *The ground commander requires adjustable fires with a sustainable volume and a wide variety of effects that his organic fire support assets can provide.*

Depending on the tactical situation, the ground commander may not need to destroy a target with artillery. While maneuvering his forces against an adversary, the ground commander may require quickly delivered suppressive fires to get the enemy to change intentions while the commander achieves a tactical advantage.

Fixed-wing aircraft are unable to provide the sustained high volume of fires necessary against a repositioning enemy force. While target location capabilities are improving, the enemy is often fleeting and will not

remain where he first was targeted or where the first rounds were delivered. For air-delivered precision-guided munitions (PGMs) to work — a single round on a single target — you *must* have accurate target identification and location at the moment the weapon is fired. In addition, you must have a sophisticated tracking/lock-on device or other designator or be certain that the target location will not change while the round is en route.

Also, the target needs to be of such a nature that desired effects can be achieved with a single, discrete PGM round. Otherwise, the aircraft will have to re-engage the target — or the area in which the target is probably located — again and again. This is the classic scenario for employing area weapons. Of joint fires available today, only field artillery can provide responsive and sustained area fires with diverse effects for the ground force in close combat — that is, unless the maneuver commander can be guaranteed to have a lot of CAS available at one time.

Even in the first major battle between U.S. forces and Vietnamese regulars at Ia Drang in 1965 where the fighting was desperate and CAS was plentiful, field artillery fires were critical to the survival of the U.S. battalion. The battalion commander, now Lieutenant General (Retired) Harold (Hal) G. Moore, said,

“Our most effective fire support was field artillery.... [that during the three days of the battle, he had] “practically nonstop field artillery fires—*magnificent*.” General Moore said “the 105- mm howitzers ...five miles away fired so fast and often that some recoil mechanisms failed [and] one tube melted.” (Quotes were taken from the interview with General Moore, “We Were Soldiers Once ...The Battles of Ia Drang, 1965,” *Field Artillery* magazine July-August 1999.)

An organic cannon battalion can make adjustments within 15 seconds while an air asset, at a minimum, will have to make another pass, fly out for refueling or return to its home base to rearm. The maneuver commander often requires special munitions: smoke, illumination and scatterable mines. The Air Force, other service fixed-wing aircraft and attack

aviation can deliver all these munitions, but the aircraft must depart the air base with these special munitions *onboard*. While relying on fixed-wing support, the commander may not have flexibility — he may have to attack targets with the munitions on the aircraft, regardless of whether or not they will provide the effects he desires, which could limit his ability to achieve his intent. Cannon battalions have the full suite of munitions onboard and can change types of munitions rapidly (measured in seconds).

- *Organic fire support assets have the same endurance and persistence as the ground forces they support.* They do not have to leave the theater for retraining, refitting or any other activity more frequently than any other portion of the ground force. Given their high endurance, the ground commander can use his organic fire support assets to constantly maintain the appropriate level of fire support without gaps in coverage and with scalable effects. This is particularly important during transitions or non-contiguous operations.

- *Organic fire support brings cost-effective methods to provide effects from small-scale suppression to point destruction to area destruction.* These effects can be scaled to meet the immediate needs of the ground commander and, as importantly, can be transitioned at the same rate as the supported force requires. Thus, without significant reorganization or change in munitions, organic fire support can provide the proper mix of effects during major combat operations and then transition to stability operations and support operations (SOSO). In other words, organic assets can shift rapidly from providing fires in support of a brigade in contact to fires in support of a foot patrol, roadblock or other small-scale military operations that are highly restricted by the ROE.

This is particularly important as we look at the Future Force construct, which has multiple operations of varying intensities occurring simultaneously on the battlefield.

In addition, even with FA ammunition accounting for the majority of ground force resupply, it is still more cost effective to





Specialist Jason Baker

*Even in Afghanistan where artillery was not deployed initially in Operation Anaconda, the ground force quickly brought in howitzers that have moved throughout the area of operations and, today, fire daily in support of Coalition ground forces from firebases and forward operating bases.*

employ the variety and volume of artillery-delivered effects than the same variety and volume of air delivered effects.

• *Cannons and rockets organic to the ground forces reduce the demands on other joint assets, releasing them for operational and strategic attack missions — or when used simultaneously with other joint fires—to create synergistic effects.* The J3 of Central Command during major combat operations in OIF agrees. In the interview in this magazine, “OIF Hallmarks: Integrated Joint and Coalition Operations with Adaptable Commanders and Agile Planning and Execution,” Lieutenant General Victor E. Reunuart, USAF, said, “...a battalion commander will have many targets on the battlefield to kill that are fleeting and of high value at the tactical level. But he has indirect fires assets organic to his ground force ...[and] knows the rules of engagement, so he can attack those targets ...[these are not] targets for which we will change the ATO [air tasking order] and move resources to kill.”

In his conclusion, General Reunuart says, “In some instances, we found pieces of 155-mm rounds, ATACMS [Army tactical missile system] and air-delivered bombs in the same target area ...In many areas of Iraq, those integrated fires were synergistic, creating total effects far beyond what any one of the services could have produced.”

As we continue to develop and refine our force structure, equipment and TTPs to fit the new tactical paradigm, fires will play an increasingly important role. As an enabler to precision maneuver, responsive, organic fire support assets will help shape the battlefield, shield friendly forces and provide close support to isolate and destroy the enemy. U.S. combat will be prosecuted as fast as possible while preserving the lives of not

only friendly Soldiers, but also the lives and property of innocent civilians and their infrastructure. This modern American way of war was prosecuted in major combat operations in OIF and organic artillery was critical to its success.

Even in Afghanistan where artillery was not deployed initially in Operation Anaconda, the ground force quickly brought in howitzers that have moved throughout the area of operations and, today, fire daily in support of Coalition ground forces from firebases and forward operating bases.

In May 2002, then Army Chief of Staff General Eric K. Shinseki testified before Congress on the importance of organic indirect fires. He stated, “Successful ground combat against determined enemies requires responsive and timely indirect fires. Organic and inorganic indirect fire support are important to ground combat operations, *but organic fires have been indispensable to success*” (emphasis added). (The testimony was

before the Committee on Armed Services on 16 May 2002.) This statement was based on not only his more than 30 years of service to the nation in peace and war, but also on his clear understanding of the enduring nature of close combat operations.

As we build the Army’s Future Force, we must take advantage of every technological edge and the synergies inherent in joint operations to ensure the success of our commanders and the Soldiers they lead. However, we must heed the lessons of past and recent wars.

On organic fires, the message is clear: ground force commanders need responsive, organic fires to ensure success in full spectrum combat operations and to offset the risks inherent in those operations — now and in the future.

---

**Colonel Robert F. Barry II** is the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Systems Manager for Cannons at the Field Artillery Center, Fort Sill, Oklahoma. He also was the Senior Fire Support Trainer (Wolf 07) at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California. He commanded the 4th Battalion, 1st Field Artillery (4-1 FA), 1st Armored Division, at Fort Riley, Kansas. In the 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized), he was the S3 and Executive Officer (XO) of the Division Artillery and S3 and XO in 1-9 FA at Fort Stewart, Georgia. He deployed in combat to Operation Provide Comfort in northern Iraq, Operations Desert Shield and Storm in the Gulf, Operation Just Cause in Panama and for stability and support operations (SASO) in Africa and the Middle East. He is a graduate of the Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, and the School for Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He holds three master’s degrees, including one in Strategic Studies from the War College and a Master of Military Art and Science from the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth.

---



# Task Force China in Baghdad

## TF 3-15 INF

# DEFENDS THE CROSSROADS



ARTHUR A. DURANTE

*I developed the following article from notes taken during a series of personal interviews conducted in Baghdad. I have done my best to make this account as historically accurate as possible, but there may be minor discrepancies. Such is the nature of war with all its fog, emotions, and confusion. It is my intention to tell the story of the incredible dedication, the hardships, the courage, and the professionalism of the American Soldiers in this battle. Unfortunately, my writing can't do them justice. I have left out much, but I have their story in my notes, in my head, and in my heart. I was never in my life more proud of the American Soldier than I was of those on that battlefield.*

*I stand humbled before these men — Art Durante, 23 May 2003, Baghdad.*

The first week of April 2003 found the U.S. units in Iraq locked in mortal combat against the forces of Saddam Hussein. By 6 April 2003, the 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized) had consolidated its positions around the Baghdad airport which it had seized on the night of 3 April.

A day after the 1st Brigade Combat Team (BCT) moved against the airport, Colonel David Perkins, commander of the 2nd BCT, had driven his powerful formation against the Iraqi forces south of the city in the vicinity of Objective Saints. This was the intersection of Highway 8 from the south and Highway 1 running east and west. After hard fighting, the 2nd BCT secured Objective Saints, and on 5 April, had launched Task Force 1-64 Armor on a

spectacular “Thunder Run” deep into the center of Baghdad and then back out west to airport.

Major General Buford C. Blount III, commander of the 3rd Infantry Division, wanted to increase the pressure on the regime even more, and to do that he again chose the 2nd BCT. He and COL Perkins developed a plan to attack out of Objective Saints against the heart of Saddam’s government. The commander’s intent was to demonstrate his ability to operate large-scale armored and mechanized forces deep within the capital city, thereby disproving the claim that U.S. forces were unable to penetrate Baghdad and to put unbearable pressure on the regime.

Two armored task forces made up the main effort. Task Forces 1-64 Armor and

4-64 Armor were to attack into the city and seize the presidential palace district. Task Force 3-15 Infantry, also known as Task Force China, was the supporting effort. Its mission was to seize and retain a series of east-west road junctions north of Objective Saints along Highway 8, and to secure Objective Saints itself from the Iraqi forces still active south of the city.

Intelligence reports had indicated that after the 2nd BCT’s initial reconnaissance-in-force run through the city on 5 April, Iraqi forces had established roadblocks at major intersections and built other obstacles to block movement into the city. They had also laid a surface minefield along Highway 8 north of Objective Saints.

At first light on 7 April, the 2nd BCT crossed the line of departure along the

northern perimeter of Objective Saints, moved through the Iraqi minefield that its engineers had breached in the hours before dawn, and thundered north on Highway 8. Task Force 1-64 Armor took the lead. It moved to seize objectives deep in the center of the city, the Tomb of the Unknowns and the adjoining park. Task Force 4-64 Armor followed with the objective of seizing two of Saddam Hussein's palaces along the Tigris River.

Task Force 3-15 Infantry fell into its assigned position at the rear of the brigade column and followed the two leading armor task forces. Task Force China was organized to drop company-sized combined arms teams at each of the three major road intersections along the line of communication into the city. These teams would hold the intersections, dominate the terrain around them, and thereby facilitate the resupply of the forces in the city.

The 2nd BCT immediately encountered several obstacles and met heavy enemy resistance as it fought its way northward to its objectives. Within hours, both the armor task forces had seized their objectives, but fierce fighting continued all the way from the perimeter of Objective Saints, north along the axis of attack and up to both objectives. Iraqi regular army units, groups of Saddam Fedayeen, and militia forces continued to counterattack the 2nd BCT at multiple points.

The leading armor task force made heavy contact with Iraqi infantry armed with rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) and small arms. The tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles (BFVs) bypassed several obstacles and engaged a large number of Iraqis in bunkers and along the sides of the highway. The enemy was trying to block the road with anything they could find, including construction equipment. This was a clear indicator that although the 3rd Division had caught the enemy by surprise with its Thunder Run on 5 April, the Iraqis had recovered and were determined to stop this attack.

Once they had fought their way through the hard crust of the Iraqi defense, the lead U.S. task forces found fewer enemy forces protecting the route into downtown. Soon, the leading task force, TF 1-64 Armor, was in the city center and linked up with special operations forces (SOF) elements there. Iraqi resistance flared up and at times was especially fierce, but the 2nd BCT forces in the city were able to defeat every counterattack thrown at them.

While the U.S. forces fought off local attacks and cleared the areas around the palaces, the 2nd BCT commander and the commander of TF 1-64 Armor looked for a statue of Saddam to destroy in order to send a distinct message to forces loyal to the regime remaining in the city. Eventually, they located a suitable statue and destroyed it with a well-placed 120mm main gun round from an M1 tank. Shortly afterwards, Task Force 1-64 Armor defeated a counterattack by lightly armed trucks and Iraqi infantry armed with RPGs. The U.S. units began to hunt down the Iraqi air defense artillery systems in the city center and cleared out a large concentration of Iraqi forces in the city zoo.

During this part of the battle, at about 10 a.m., the 2nd BCT tactical operations center (TOC), which was located back at Objective Saints, took a direct hit from an Iraqi surface-to-surface missile. The huge blast and the erupting fireball destroyed many of the vehicles and much of the equipment at the TOC. The explosion killed three Soldiers and two embedded journalists and wounded dozens more. Soldiers of 2nd Brigade worked frantically to treat and evacuate the wounded, and to recover equipment and

restore communications. Their heroic efforts enabled the TOC to get back on the net in one hour and to be operational again an hour later.

### **TF 3-15 INFANTRY JOINS THE ACTION**

As the units making up the brigade's main effort were accomplishing their tasks, the tactical focus of the battle for the center of Baghdad shifted to the actions of Task Force China. The enemy placed intense pressure against the critical supply line running north into the city from Objective Saints.

Portions of Task Force 3-15 Infantry had moved into Objective Saints late in the afternoon of the 6th of April, after fighting a wearying battle to secure the east side of Objective Peach, the main crossing site on the Euphrates. However, the task force commander, Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Twitty, and a large number of fighting vehicles and tanks were still at the river, finishing the destruction of Iraqi forces there. When the call from 2nd BCT came in announcing a meeting of commanders to issue the operations order for the next morning's attack, LTC Twitty was not able to get to the 2nd BCT's headquarters. He sent his operations officer in his place.

COL Perkins directed LTC Twitty to detach Captain Ronny Johnson's B Company, 3-15th Infantry, with two of its mechanized infantry rifle platoons, to the control of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team. LTC Twitty retained control of only one of the mechanized infantry rifle platoons from B Company. This order from 2nd BCT left him with four mechanized infantry rifle platoons and three tank platoons from his cross-attached tank company.

### **TASK FORCE CHINA OPERATIONS ORDER**

After the task force operations officer came back with the order for the next day's attack, LTC Twitty began a rapid analysis of his mission and the troops at hand. He considered the forces he had left after detaching B Company and out of these, he task-organized his unit into three company-sized teams for his mission.

Finally, he was ready to issue the order for the most important attack of the war for Task Force China. The hard-working battalion operations NCO had found an empty bombed-out building without a roof for them to use as a place to plan and to issue the task force attack order. The men of the battalion headquarters pulled a tarp over the top of the building, and used ponchos to block the light from the smashed windows. At midnight, LTC Twitty issued the order for an attack at 0600 hours the next day, 7 April, into the heart of Baghdad.

The task force commander described the issuing of this operations order as a very dramatic and tense time for all of them. They had all had little or no sleep in the last two days. With their NCOs working along side them in the dark, the men were feverously refueling and resupplying ammunition in all the vehicles, something that was critical after the heavy fighting earlier that day. Every Soldier knew that this was going to be a difficult mission. They piled the extra ammunition into every space they could find.

The officers were huddled with the task force commander as the magnitude of the mission they were going to carry out began to sink in. "I looked into the eyes of everyone in that bombed out building, and for the first time, I saw real fear. After the battles in the city on 5 April by our sister task force, we knew this would be



bad. We also knew we could do this ... we had to." (LTC Twitty)

Twitty's plan called for a company-sized combined arms team to capture and hold each of the three task force objectives. For reasons known only to them, the planners on the TF 3-15 Infantry staff had given these objectives the names of the three stooges, Curley, Larry, and Moe. It certainly did make them easy to remember. LTC Twitty had his commanders talk through a simple rehearsal, moving yellow sticky notes around on a small sand table to show they understood his scheme of maneuver and intent.

### TASK ORGANIZATION

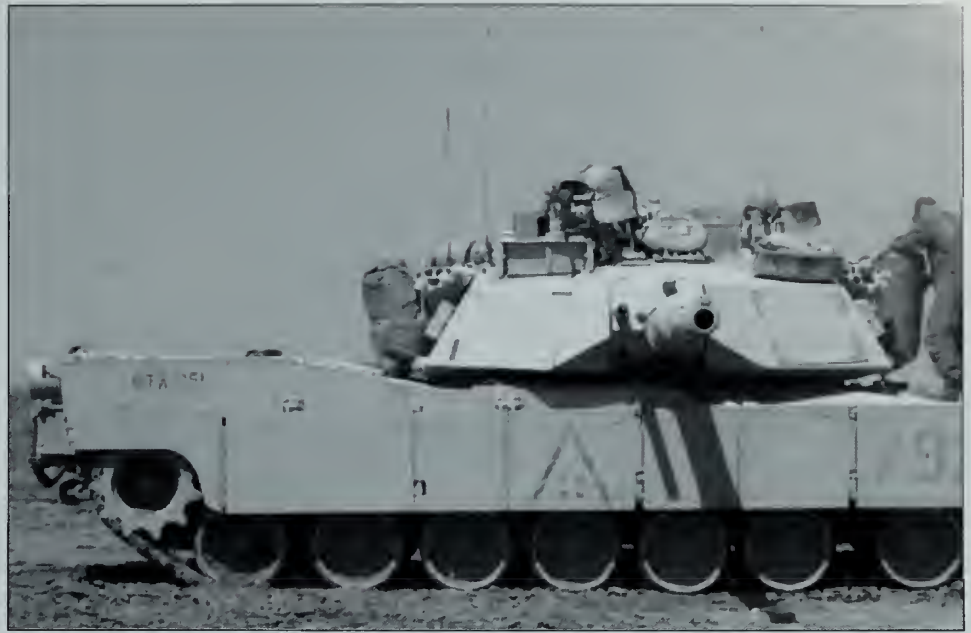
Twitty built his first combined arms team, Team GATOR, around the headquarters of C Company, 3rd Battalion 15th Infantry. It consisted of two mechanized infantry platoons and a tank platoon from the cross-attached tank company, B Company, 4th Battalion, 64th Armor.

He built the second, Team RAGE, around the headquarters of the attached tank company from the 4th Battalion 64th Armor. It consisted of two tank platoons and a mechanized rifle platoon.

Twitty created his third company team, Team ZAN, specifically for this mission. Captain Zan Hornbuckle, normally an assistant operations officer in the battalion headquarters, commanded it. Task Force 3-15 Infantry had three battle captains in the S3 section. CPT Zan Hornbuckle was the senior battle captain. He was a graduate of the Infantry School's Captains Career Course (ICCC) and had served as an instructor in the Ranger Brigade for two years.

CPT Hornbuckle would have only six short hours, in the dark, to organize his team, issue orders, ensure the vehicles were fuelled and armed, and ready his men for the attack at 0600 hours. Only the long association of CPT Hornbuckle with the battalion, and the hard realistic training they had all gone through together in the months before the war made this possible.

When it moved to seize and defend Objective Curley on the morning of 7 April, Team ZAN consisted of one mechanized infantry rifle platoon (four BFVs), the battalion heavy mortar platoon led by First Lieutenant Josh Woodruff (four mortar tracks and an M557 FDC track), and a



Sergeant Igor Paustovski

*Task Force 1-64 of the 3rd Infantry Division launched the spectacular "Thunder Run" into Baghdad April 5 and again attacked into the city's presidential district April 7.*

reinforced engineer platoon (four M113 armored personnel carriers [APCs] and two M9 armored combat earthmovers [ACEs]). CPT Hornbuckle brought with him an "extra" M2 Bradley fighting vehicle that LTC Twitty had drawn from the depot stocks in Kuwait. This vehicle had been intended for the air defense artillery (ADA) platoon leader, but it was being used by the task force S3. Its powerful weapons proved to be valuable assets on Objective Curley.

In addition to the combat elements under his command, CPT Hornbuckle also had the battalion's medical aid team with the battalion surgeon and the battalion's command sergeant major with him. Command Sergeant Major Robert Gallagher routinely traveled in one of the battalion's M88 recovery vehicles, and it was normal for him to position himself at the most critical point during any operation. His combat instincts told him that Team ZAN on Objective Curley was just such a point.

Along with the CSM were two M577 command and control vehicles that made up the task force tactical operations center. There were also several embedded media personnel. A photographer from *Army Magazine*, Daniel Steele, was one of the embedded media. His photographs, along with the striking video taken by an NBC cameraman, of the fighting at Objective Curley would bring home to America the fierceness of this battle.

LTC Twitty had directed that the battalion fire support officer accompany Team ZAN. This not only gave CPT Hornbuckle a fire support coordinator, it added another BFV with its deadly 25mm cannon to the team's firepower. LTC Twitty retained a portion of the TF scout platoon, the engineer company headquarters section, an air liaison team from the U.S. Air Force with an enlisted tactical air controller, a psychological operations (PSYOP) team, and a tactical human intelligence (HUMINT) team under his control. Most of the scout platoon was with B Company back at Objective Saints, protecting the logistics area.

### MISSION

The mission for TF 3-15 Infantry was to seize the series of major east-west road junctions, Objectives Curley, Larry, and Moe (south to north) along Highway 8. Holding these objectives would allow freedom of movement of the 2nd BCT's logistics elements from Objective Saints north into the center of the city where TF 1-64 Armor and TF 4-64 Armor, other elements of the 2nd BCT, were to attack and seize their objectives.

The combat elements of the two armor-heavy task forces preceded movement of TF 3-15 Infantry to its objectives along Highway 8. Each of the armored columns passed through the three road junctions and each received fire from the Iraqi defenders



there. Although heavy, this fire was not sufficient to impede the movement of the armored vehicles. However, without U.S. forces controlling the sites, the soft-skinned resupply elements of the 2nd BCT would not be able to follow the armored vehicles and resupply them.

### THE OBJECTIVES

The order of movement for TF 3-15 Infantry was Team GATOR, Team RAGE, Task Force HQ, and Team ZAN. Team GATOR was to seize the northernmost objective, Moe. Team RAGE was to seize the center objective, Larry, and Team ZAN (the team with the least combat power) was to seize objective Curley.

LTC Twitty chose to position himself on Objective Larry, the center objective. He did this to ensure that he would have effective communications to all his battalion's subordinate elements. He was worried that if he were located at either the northern or the southern end of the highway he would not be able to talk by FM radio with the most distant company team. With the TF commander at Objective Larry was his personal vehicle crew, Staff Sergeant Carmen (gunner) and Specialist Reisbeck, normally a communications specialist, as driver.

Both Team RAGE and Team GATOR had supporting company fire support teams with Bradley Fire Support Vehicles (BFISTs). Team ZAN, however, had no company BFIST vehicle. The third BFIST vehicle was with the detached B Company at Objective Saints. To compensate, LTC Twitty had assigned the battalion fire support officer (FSO) to remain at Objective Curley.

CPT Johnson had occupied a blocking position with one of his mechanized rifle platoons along Highway 8 along Phase Line SNAKE, about six kilometers south of Objective Curley. This was the northernmost element in Objective Saints. CPT Johnson's company was under the tactical control of the 2nd BCT Engineer battalion headquarters, which was tasked with protecting the soft-skinned vehicles and the logistics elements of the brigade remaining behind in Objective Saints.

From Objective Curley, it was approximately 3½ kilometers due north to Objective Larry. It was only about 1½ kilometers on from there to the task force's most northern objective, Moe.

The designated time for crossing the line of departure was 0600 hours local time. Because of the time it took for elements ahead of him to clear the crowded area in Objective Saints, LTC Twitty's lead company team crossed the LD (Phase Line SNAKE) at 0620 hours local time.

The 1st Battalion, 41st Field Artillery, the 2nd BCT's direct support artillery unit, fired intense high explosive preparatory fires on all three of the road junctions before the armor task forces passed through them. Along the route, the tankers and Bradley gunners of both armor task forces had blasted dozens of Iraqi positions as they moved along Highway 8. Despite this heavy pounding, Task Force China was engaged by enemy fire from all sides the moment it crossed the line of departure. The enemy was firing RPGs and small arms from positions in the buildings along Highway 8 and from bunkers built near the roadside.

LTC Twitty immediately realized that the enemy he faced here in Baghdad was completely different from the other Iraqi forces he had fought. Earlier, units had fought, but they had shown a "certain softness" (LTC Twitty), an unwillingness to fight to the death. It quickly became clear to the commander that today would

be a battle different than anything his unit had faced before.

During the task force's train-up prior to the war, LTC Twitty had taken advantage of the training offered by MPRI (a civilian defense contractor) to teach every member of the unit the basics of reflexive fire, entering and clearing a trench, and assaulting and clearing a bunker. This training paid huge dividends during the battles to seize and retain Objectives Curley, Larry, and Moe. One of the MPRI employees mentioned by name as being particularly helpful was Larry Word.

LTC Twitty's order to his team commanders was, "Don't stop until you reach your objective." Despite the fire it received along the route, each team followed those orders and reached its objective without halting. Although LTC Twitty had his U.S. Air Force enlisted tactical air controller with him, during the battle, the enemy "hugged" the U.S. positions too tightly for effective close air support to be directed against them.

### THE BATTLE AT OBJECTIVE CURLEY

At Objective Curley, Team ZAN established a hasty defense with the mortar platoon's tracked carriers in a loose column on Highway 8, with two mortars aimed north and the other two aimed south. The engineer platoon had responsibility for the east side of the cloverleaf intersection and the mechanized infantry platoon was responsible for the west side.

As soon as it arrived and dismounted, the infantry platoon and a small Special Forces liaison element accompanying TF China was engaged in a fierce fight to clear the multiple trenches that the defenders had dug in and around and under the elevated portions of the intersection. The main fight at first was for the area directly under the overpass, which had been designated as the location of the company team command post.

It immediately became clear that more men would be needed than just those available from the infantry platoon. It was then that LTC Twitty's emphasis on combat skills for ALL Soldiers, not just the riflemen, began to pay off. Drivers and radio operators from the TOC M577s soon joined the riflemen in assaulting and clearing the trench lines. Although the Special Forces troopers had come along intending to make contact with local citizens and to gather useful information, they too pitched into the battle, repeatedly engaging the enemy in close-range firefights and assaulting the crude but effective fortifications thrown up by the



Specialist Andrew Kosterman

*A destroyed Iraqi T-55 tank sits alongside a highway during the opening days of Operation Iraqi Freedom.*



defenders. Several were wounded early in the fight but kept up their fire regardless.

The main enemy force at Objective Curley was Syrian jihadists who had come to Iraq specifically to fight the Americans, sworn to win or die. They had been in position for approximately two days and had dug trenches and built sturdy bunker positions amid the construction rubble surrounding the cloverleaf intersections.

These were perhaps not trained soldiers in the Western sense of the word, but they were experienced fighters who chose not to reveal themselves all at once. They engaged U.S. forces passing through the intersection at Objective Curley with some weapons, but not until Team ZAN occupied the position did they show how much combat force they actually had.

Team ZAN eventually captured 30 enemy prisoners of war at Objective Curley. Of these, 28 were carrying Syrian passports or were otherwise identified as non-Iraqi. After the battle was over (sometime after 9 April), local citizens approached U.S. forces at the road junction and asked for permission to give the Iraqi dead a proper burial. LTC Twitty agreed, of course. The local Iraqis took away the bodies of the few dead fighters that were wearing Iraqi army uniforms, but refused to have anything to do with the masses of dead Syrians, expressing their disgust and hatred of these fanatics to anyone who would listen.

The Syrian and Iraqi fighters defended Objective Curley from trenches and bunkers built near the intersection. They also fired from nearby buildings and retaining walls. They attacked from all directions on foot and in commandeered taxis and civilian cars or in civilian pickup trucks mounted with heavy machine guns on pedestals. They fired RPGs in volley from two-to-three man teams under the covering fire of light machine guns and AK-47 rifles. They often fired RPGs from long range, lobbing them high in the air to land among the U.S. defenders.



Sergeant First Class David Dismukes

*A 3rd Infantry Division Bradley fighting vehicle rolls down a Baghdad street days after the battles at Objectives Moe, Larry, and Curley.*

Iraqi Army and Saddam Fedayeen reinforced the jihadists. They used mortars and field artillery, normally firing pre-planned concentrations using one to three rounds at a time. They did not seem to be able to adjust this fire, but they repeated the fire missions often.

There was a large building on the northwest corner of the intersection and from it rained a hail of rifle and machine gun fire. At some times, there were so many enemy firing from that building that it appeared to the U.S. Soldiers that the whole structure was “twinkling and blinking” (LTC Twitty). Repeated attempts by the gunners of Bradley fighting vehicles to suppress these fires were not successful. Although the fire would decrease for a while, it would soon build again.

CSM Gallagher recommended that the mortar platoon fire direct lay missions against the building, something CPT Zan readily agreed to. The mortar platoon initiated what would be the first of many direct lay missions in support of the defense of Objective Curley.

The fighting at Objective Curley was fierce and continuous from the moment the U.S. forces halted and dismounted their vehicles. The small U.S. force on Objective Curley was hard-pressed. The enemy attacked with a fanaticism unknown since the screaming Japanese kamikaze charges in the Pacific or the fierce night assaults of the North Vietnamese Army in the Central

Highlands of Vietnam. The Americans fought back just as hard, pounding the enemy with everything they had.

The mortar platoon was firing indirect fire in support of the forces at Objectives Moe and Larry, firing direct lay missions against the attackers at Objective Curley, and defending its portion of the perimeter with its heavy machine guns and small arms, all the time under a hail of fire from RPGs, AK-47s, and enemy indirect fire.

This battle proved the wisdom of the American Army's

decision to replace the aged 107 mm mortar with the newer, more powerful 120mm. The newer mortar's ability to fire at very close-range targets, along with its faster rate of fire and more lethal ammunition, was the difference between life and death several times that day.

Although they were cleared out several times, the enemy was able to reoccupy the shallow trenches around the periphery of the cloverleaf on and off ramps whenever the U.S. forces moved to another portion of the perimeter. Enemy forces occupied a shallow trench and bunker site near the northeastern off ramp. Growing bolder, small groups of attackers edged closer and closer to the position from all directions, and although the direct lay mortar missions against the large building to the north had helped, fierce fire was still coming from there.

The fighting was at close range, and it was brutal. One group of Americans assaulted into a crude trench and wiped out its defenders at close range in a furious exchange of fire. Only when they were searching the dead did they notice that one of the defenders was a woman. She had been fighting along side the men, firing an AK-47 at the Americans. Even so, it bothered the Soldier that had shot her. His friends told him that it was a case of kill or be killed and that she had made her choice. It was little consolation, but it had to do. The battle went on.



## THE MORTAR PLATOON ON OBJECTIVE CURLEY

The actions of the mortar platoon of TF 3-15 Infantry deserve special attention. Not only did it defend a sector of the Team ZAN perimeter, but also its indirect fires played a large role in the successful actions at all three objectives.

LTC Twitty discovered early on in the fight that his mortars would play a key role. The battles leading up to this one had not presented many opportunities to bring his mortars to play against the Iraqis, but this fight made up for all that. "The mortars were my artillery! I could clear my own fires, and that made a big difference. It took the mortar platoon about one to two minutes to fire a mission for us" (LTC Twitty).

The mortar platoon was not the only unit firing in support of the defenders of Objective Curley. The supporting field artillery battalion had been called up for several missions. Four or five hours into the fight, the artillery had fired a "danger close" mission against a building on the northeastern portion of the perimeter that was being used by Iraqi snipers and RPG gunners. The mission was successful in suppressing the fire for a while, but it eventually started again.

The battalion FSO called for a repeat of the original mission. According to him, the artillery battalion FDC passed the mission to a different battery than the one that had fired the original mission. When this battery fired the mission, a single round landed short of the target and wounded two Team ZAN Soldiers. The FSO called an immediate check-fire.

After that, the FSO decided that it was better to use the mortars rather than the artillery for the missions around Objective Curley. He used his mortar platoon exclusively for the next 24 hours. The mortar platoon did not have any short rounds during the battle. The mortar platoon was in constant action. It fired at seven targets in support of the most northern objective, Moe. Six of these were "danger close."

It fired one mission against a heavily wooded area in which an estimated Iraqi platoon was gathered. The FDC called for a combination of high explosive (HE)-Delay, HE-Quick, and white phosphorus (WP) rounds. The platoon fired a series of missions, each on a slightly different range and deflection, in effect a search-and-traverse mission, using more than 40 rounds. The observer reported the entire Iraqi platoon destroyed.

Another time, an observer sent a grid location of a target, reporting a force of 40 to 50 Iraqis with at least one pickup truck mounting a machine gun moving north up an alley towards the U.S. position. The mortars fired an immediate suppression mission, without any adjusting rounds, and hit the truck with the first volley. The survivors of the Iraqi attack force were dispersed.

The battalion FSO was not the only person calling for and adjusting the mortar fires. At one time or another, company FSOs, forward observers, company commanders, squad leaders, platoon leaders, and even a company executive officer all called



Captain Bill Thompson/ First Lieutenant Jesse Delgado

*Mortars played a key role during the battles at all three objectives. Firing both high explosive and white phosphorus rounds, the mortar platoon was in constant action.*

for mortar fires. It just depended on who was in the best position to observe the fire.

Although the mortar platoon leader, Captain Woodruff, used the aiming circle at least once during the war to lay the mortars for direction, normally the squad leaders would lay the individual mortars using their M2 compasses. The unit had trained extensively for this, and had practiced occupying firing positions on roads. The platoon leader trusted his mortar squad leaders, even though several of them were relatively junior Soldiers. He and the platoon sergeant had trained them well, and they did not have any problems because of mistakes in lay for direction.

During the fighting on Objective Curley, the mortar platoon had two misfires — rounds that dropped, but did not fire. The crews executed by-the-book drills to reduce the misfires and get back into action. The only modification they made was that they did not exit the mortar track and wait for the tube to cool; they reduced the misfire immediately and returned to firing missions.

The 120mm rounds proved to be deadly to both exposed attackers and to buildings. Several missions during this battle were against buildings occupied by Iraqi forces. The mortar platoon would engage a building using HE-Delay. The U.S. troops were always impressed by the amount of damage the heavy mortars would cause, even against substantial buildings.

CPT Woodruff had several good things to say about the training he received at the Infantry Mortar Leader's Course (IMLC). He said that it had thoroughly prepared him to train and lead a mortar platoon in combat. He stated, "I kept a copy of FM 7-90, *Tactical Employment of Mortars*, with me at all times." He said that the doctrine contained in that manual was very useful to him in this war.

The mortar platoon tracks were equipped with what the troops called "ACAV kits." These were heavy metal gun-shields that protected the normally exposed gunners of the heavy machine guns.





Sergeant First Class David Dismukes

*Private Christopher Nanman, seen here during precombat drills along the Kuwait border, was wounded during the fighting at Objective Curley. As he was being carried to the aid station, Nanman provided security from his litter and ended up shooting an approaching enemy soldier.*

## REINFORCEMENT OF TEAM ZAN

The fighting at the other two objectives, Larry and Moe, was equally fierce, but the task force commander knew that retaining control of Objective Curley was key to his mission. After about three hours of heavy combat, LTC Twitty called CPT Hornbuckle on the radio. He said, "Zan, just tell me. Do you need extra help?"

CPT Hornbuckle didn't say "yes," that he did need help. He knew that he had to hold his position, and he knew that the rest of the task force was under pressure, too. Although he said that he could hold without reinforcements, his high level of stress came across the airwaves to his battalion commander, with whom he had worked for many months in close proximity. LTC Twitty could sense that things were difficult

at Objective Curley, but he still didn't know for sure that the forces there needed help. He had precious little to give them anyway, as all three task force objectives were under heavy attack.

Acting on his gut instinct, he confirmed his analysis with a call to CSM Gallagher asking for his assessment. Gallagher, tagged as "Black Hawk Bob" by the media because he had fought and been seriously wounded in the fighting in Mogadishu in 1993, had been in the thick of the fighting from the beginning and had already been wounded again at Objective Curley.

When the commander contacted him, the sergeant major was standing up next to his M88 recovery vehicle with his leg bandaged, firing his M4 carbine at the attackers closing in on the TOC location. CSM

Gallagher answered LTC Twitty's question straight up, without hesitation ... "Yes sir, we need help, and we need it now" (LTC Twitty).

LTC Twitty called the 2nd BCT commander, COL Perkins, and asked for the release of a mechanized infantry platoon from his B Company, still occupying the blocking position along Phase Line SNAKE north of Objective Saints.

CPT Johnson, listening in on the radio conversation, and knowing the situation on Objective Curley, made one of the most important recommendations of the battle. He suggested to the commander that, instead of sending just a single platoon, he gather both his rifle platoons for the reinforcement of Curley and come north as

a company with every armored fighting vehicle he could scrape together. Within moments, the 2nd BCT commander had considered and accepted that plan.

Although his forces had been in almost constant contact with the enemy at the blocking position and further south with the logistical elements, when LTC Twitty gave the order for CPT Johnson to, "Get to Curley! ASAP!" (LTC Twitty) he was able to move quickly. He had been listening to the radio messages and to the roar of fire from his north, and had anticipated such a situation.

B Company, 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry was ready to move and move fast to aid its friends. The company came roaring north with every weapon it had firing. It was just in time. "It was the most amazing thing. CPT Johnson moved to Objective Curley within 15 minutes. The fighting was fierce. The first squad leader out of his track was shot as he dismounted" (LTC Twitty).

CPT Johnson and his company arrived like the proverbial cavalry to the rescue. According to one man that was there, "There was not a Soldier on Curley that did not think he was going to die that day" (CPL Warren Hall).

According to one of the embedded media present at the fight, the enemy had pressed closer and closer against the embattled defenders. The company medics had armed themselves to defend their patients. The wounded still able to fire a weapon had picked up arms. The battalion command sergeant major was wounded in the leg but still fighting, and even the Chaplain had picked up a weapon to help defend the wounded unable to fight back.

CPT Johnson's arrival tipped the scales of battle, but the enemy wasn't ready to admit defeat immediately. The fighting was so fierce on Objective Curley that huge amounts of expended ammunition littered the entire area of the cloverleaf. Two days after the fighting, Private First Class David Turner, a mechanic in HHC, 3-15 Infantry, passed by the site in a convoy. He described the streets and ground around Curley as "shimmering in the sun like gold from all the expended brass lying on the ground."

## THE BATTLE AT OBJECTIVE LARRY

While CPT Johnson and B Company





Sergeant FirstClass David K. Dismukes

*The realistic training the task force conducted prior to the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom contributed to the unit's success during OIF operations. Above, Soldiers from the 3-15 Infantry conduct drills in Kuwait December 9, 2002.*

were reinforcing Objective Curley, the fighting was also intense at Objective Larry where the task force commander had positioned himself.

Team RAGE had moved through the intersection at Phase Line COLORADO, shooting its way past the Iraqi defenders on what was to become Curley. The team commander led with one of his tank platoons and had a mechanized infantry platoon bring up the rear. All totaled, Team RAGE consisted of 19 armored vehicles including the task force commander's.

At Objective Larry, one tank platoon had responsibility for the northeast quadrant while another took the southeast quadrant. The mechanized infantry platoon had responsibility for the entire west side of the objective. Enemy attacks began immediately, mainly from the south but also from buildings to the northwest, from the crossover road to the west, and from a jumble of buildings to the southwest.

The main effort, at least for the first several hours, was a series of individual and group suicide attacks by vehicles racing towards the U.S. positions from the south. Filled with armed men, these vehicles would race towards the intersection with weapons firing out the windows or from the beds of the pickup trucks. The Iraqis attacked using the ubiquitous Iraqi white and orange taxis, city busses, dump trucks, and, in one case, a huge lumbering

recreational vehicle (LTC Twitty).

These enemy vehicles would often be filled with weapons and explosives, so much that often, when high explosive rounds from the Bradley's 25mm cannon or a tank round struck them, they would explode in a tremendous secondary explosion, scattering debris across the road and adding to the scene of carnage that quickly developed south of the position.

The attacks were as incessant as they were futile, but they were pressed home with a fierceness and determination to defy the U.S. fire that made the men on Objective Larry come to believe that the Iraqis were all using some sorts of drugs.

LTC Twitty, positioned on top of the overpass in the center of the intersection, was in the thick of the fight along with all the others. Within the first two hours of his arrival at Objective Larry, he had to reload the 25mm ammunition he carried in his M2 fighting vehicle. His gunner was engaging targets on his own, while LTC Twitty maintained contact with the other elements of the task force, cleared supporting fires, and kept the 2nd BCT commander updated. Eventually, he estimated that 50 to 80 enemy suicide attackers in different vehicles were destroyed south of Objective Larry.

The tank platoons of Team RAGE were primarily used to engage and destroy the high-speed attackers moving towards the

position along the main roads. The Bradley fighting vehicles were supporting the infantry squads who had dismounted and were clearing the nearby buildings and trenches of the dozens of Iraqi riflemen and RPG gunners.

The enemy that Team RAGE faced included a fair amount of dismounted Republican Guard troops as well as some Special Republican Guards, but the main element was the suicide bombers and the pickup trucks mounting heavy machine guns, often referred to as "technical vehicles" by the Soldiers of the task force.

The combat engineers accompanying Team RAGE were kept busy. At one time, LTC Twitty realized that although he was able to block the main highway with fires, the small frontage road running along the west of the elevated portion of Highway 8 would allow an attacking vehicle to approach the U.S. position without being engaged until the last moment. He ordered the engineers to have the ACE (armored combat earthmover) push up a berm of earth to block the road. The ACE driver quickly accomplished this task.

Just 15 minutes later, the wisdom of this decision was made plain. An Iraqi car, full of explosives and moving at exceptionally high speed, approached the intersection from the south. Instead of continuing straight ahead to its destruction as most of the others had done, this vehicle suddenly veered off the main road, crossed through a gap in the guardrail, and jumped the on-ramp in a feat worthy of "Evil Kneivel," the daredevil showman.

This act placed the vehicle on the frontage road, still moving at a high rate of speed, and within 100 meters of the battalion tactical command post (TAC) under the overpass. Unfortunately for the driver, the newly created berm was directly in his path.

About 75 meters from the TAC, he struck the berm at high speed. The driver's body was ejected through the windshield and came to rest less than 50 meters from the U.S. positions. When a Bradley fighting vehicle fired at the wrecked car with its 25mm cannon, the result was a huge secondary explosion that rocked the heavy armored vehicles at the overpass. "I owe my life to that ACE driver!" (LTC Twitty).

## THE BATTLE AT OBJECTIVE MOE



The fighting on Objective Moe, furthest to the north, was equally intense. Large numbers of enemy infantry armed with RPGs and automatic weapons were dug in along Highway 8 and firing from adjacent buildings. The enemy at Objective Moe was different from those at Curley. At Moe, the opposition was a combination of mounted and dismounted regular army and Republican Guard forces. They attacked using T-72 tanks, BMP-1 armored personnel carriers and large-caliber anti-aircraft weapons used in the direct fire mode.

Alpha Company "Gator" led the attack up Baghdad's "RPG Alley," Highway 8, while under intense small arms and RPG fire. The company destroyed an estimated 30 enemy personnel firing from trenches and buildings before arriving at the critically important highway cloverleaf at Objective Moe.

Objective Moe proved a veritable hornet's nest of resistance, constantly reinforced by the enemy who streamed in from the east and west. Team GATOR came under intense 360-degree direct and indirect fire. Several hundred enemy troops were entrenched along the road with a trench and bunker complex among the palms and brush, and others occupied prepared positions in adjacent buildings dominating the interchange.

As soon as Team GATOR arrived, armed enemy vehicles and truck bombs began to drive towards the cloverleaf. Iraqi infantry swarmed into the area and occupied positions behind some low walls, boxing-in the intersection, and in the buildings dominating the objective.

Captain Josh Wright, the A company commander, realized that the company's best course of action was to immediately attack into the defending Iraqis to push them back. Alpha Company made a mounted attack that temporarily cleared the cloverleaf of dismounted Iraqis.

Finding the enemy growing in numbers, and receiving reports of Iraqi tanks moving to his position, along with infantry maneuvering around his flank, Captain Wright decided to carry the attack beyond his assigned objective and fight even deeper into Baghdad.

He sent LT Daniel Van Kirk's M1A1 tank platoon charging into the city north of the objective, where they began destroying several strong points established in buildings, some air defense guns firing in the direct fire mode, and multiple Iraqi armored vehicles.

Following this limited objective spoiling attack, Alpha Company consolidated on Objective Moe and began simultaneous efforts to complete the clearance of the trenches, build obstacles on the approaches, and destroy the enemy firing on them from all sides.

The 2nd Platoon, A Company, 10th Engineers, under First Lieutenant Adam Hess and Sergeant First Class Palmer, blocked approaches to Objective Moe by cutting down light poles to form a modern version of the ancient abatis, and by using an ACE, driven by Sergeant Miller, to push debris and burning cars into defensive berms.

These efforts proved worthwhile when the obstacles allowed the company to stop a savage last-light attack that climaxed with the destruction of a car bomb just 60 meters from the perimeter.

After eight hours of sustained combat and after firing six danger-close mortar missions and 20 danger-close artillery missions, a survey of the battlefield indicated that Alpha Company

**As soon as Team GATOR arrived, armed enemy vehicles and truck bombs began to drive towards the cloverleaf. Iraqi infantry swarmed into the area and occupied positions behind some low walls, boxing-in the intersection, and in the buildings dominating the objective.**

had destroyed more than 60 vehicles and as many as 200 enemy infantrymen. However, the company team was desperately short of ammunition.

#### **THE RESUPPLY CONVOY MOVES NORTH**

The Team GATOR commander reported to LTC Twitty that he was in "black" status on main gun ammunition for his tank platoon, coax machine gun ammunition for the Bradleys and tanks, and on small arms ammunition for his infantrymen. If it was to hold for much longer, Team GATOR at Objective Moe would need a resupply of ammunition. That meant that soft-wheeled vehicles would have to run the gauntlet from the 2nd BCT logistical area at Objective Saints all the way up to Moe, and even beyond.

The armor-heavy task forces further north were already shutting down their tanks to conserve fuel as they fought vicious gunfights with scattered Iraqi RPG teams and armored vehicles.

The 2nd BCT logisticians put together a 20-vehicle convoy full of ammunition and fuel for the units to the north. As it moved out, escorted by the scout platoon from Task Force 3-15 Infantry, it immediately began to draw fire.

#### **FIRST FRIENDLY KIAs**

During the short drive from the old B Co., 3-15th Infantry blocking position at Phase Line SNAKE to Objective Curley, the task force suffered its first fatal casualty of the battle. The Scout platoon sergeant, Sergeant First Class John Marshal, had positioned himself and his armored HMMWV in a critical position at the head of the convoy and was firing suppressive fire from his vehicle-mounted MK-19 automatic grenade launcher when he was struck and killed by an RPG. The convoy continued to move despite the loss.

Just seconds later, another RPG killed the battalion maintenance NCO, Staff Sergeant Robert Stever, who was firing a heavy machine gun, this one from the maintenance section's M113 armored personnel carrier. This vehicle continued to move with the convoy. The loss of these two well-respected NCOs, coming as it did so close together, shocked the task force members who saw it or heard of it on the radio.

It was small consolation to the task force that both of these NCOs died fighting, setting an example for all around them. Witnesses reported that just prior to his death SFC Marshal had been calmly directing the defense of the column over the radio while simultaneously suppressing the enemy's fire with his automatic grenade launcher. He even had the presence of mind to make a small joke with his crew, keeping up their morale, as they fired rapidly and accurately from the vehicle's windows.

The sacrifice these two men made, and the heavy and accurate fire from their weapons, aided the large convoy immeasurably as



it pounded northward to Objective Curley, every weapon it owned firing as it passed the Iraqi RPG teams and riflemen in the buildings along the highway.

### **THE RESUPPLY CONVOY AT CURLEY**

The leader of the TF 3-15 Infantry's support platoon had arranged the convoy into two sections. The lead section did not stop at Curley. It continued on to Objective Larry. However, the other section, consisting of 20 heavy vehicles containing the resupply for Team ZAN, rattled into Objective Curley and pulled into a tight coil on the level ground just outside the overpass, inside the circling on and off ramps. Although not completely safe from enemy fire, this was the best position that could be found for the moment.

Soldiers from Objective Curley began immediately to unload ammunition and pass it out to the dispersed forces around the intersection, still busy fighting the Iraqi and Syrian dismounted infantry.

The mortar platoon, which had been firing almost continual fire for effect missions, at least seven of them "danger close," had actually run out of ammunition after firing more than 240 of the huge 120 mm rounds. The ammunition handlers from each squad would run to the supply trucks, load up three of the heavy rounds

in their arms, and run back to their squad mortar track, fully exposed to fire in the right lane of the main highway. As fast as those three rounds could be handed up and fired, the Soldiers would run back for three more. This went on for more than 30 minutes, with the ammunition carriers continually exposing themselves as they brought desperately needed ammo to the mortars.

### **THE LOSS OF AMMUNITION AND FUEL VEHICLES**

It was during this time at Objective Curley that what some witnesses reported as an Iraqi RPG struck one of the ammunition resupply vehicles. It immediately began to burn, and the sight of the burning and exploding supply vehicle caused the enemy to renew his fire and increase it if that was even possible.

Despite efforts to unload the remaining ammunition, the fire rapidly spread to four other vehicles. Specialist Julio Valles and Staff Sergeant Joe Todd both voluntarily exposed themselves to enemy fire to run to the cab of a vehicle and attempt to move it away from the spreading fires.

### **THE MOVEMENT NORTH**

In the chaos of the Syrian and Iraqi fire, the exploding ammunition, and the screams and shouts of Task Force 3-15 Infantry

Soldiers fighting to save the remaining vehicles, CPT Johnson made the decision to get the remaining fifteen resupply vehicles moving north, out of Objective Curley and towards Objective Larry and Moe. He had just learned that another unit, Task Force 2-7 Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Scott Rutter, was heading north to assume responsibility for the defense of Objective Curley and to release B Company to escort the remaining resupply vehicles northwards.

In fact, about this time the S3 of Task Force 2-7 Infantry, Major Rod Coffey, arrived to coordinate the relief in place. He was in a Bradley fighting vehicle and was leading an unarmored HMMWV as he drove up to Task Force 3-15 Infantry's TOC under the overpass on Objective Curley to conduct necessary adjacent unit coordination,

An overpass protected the TOC from the north, but scattered fire seemed to come in from all other directions. MAJ Coffey realized they were taking effective small arms fire. As soon as he dismounted his Bradley, the situation changed for the worse.

The fire became heavier, and RPGs began sizzling in from both sides of the highway. Shocked, he looked around and realized no one was returning fire. Instead, several exhausted Soldiers had their heads down behind anything providing cover leaving their weapons unmanned. He tried to communicate with his Bradley crew and get them back in the Bradley.

MAJ Coffey yelled, "Move forward and engage the enemy!" The Bradley thundered forward, dropping the two-man security team who began suppressing the enemy, killing several with well-aimed M-16 shots.

The gunner began firing the Bradley 25mm chain gun, suppressing and destroying the enemy. A Special Forces Soldier at the TOC manned one of the .50 cal machine guns and returned fire.

MAJ Coffey was hit by enemy fire while he was scrambling through the HMMWV trying to get to cover. An RPG round hit and exploded near him. Near the burning HMMWV, two fuel tankers also began exploding, sending flames and debris high into the air. Major Coffey sustained severe injuries to his foot, breaking bones and getting hit with nearly 12 pieces of shrapnel. He refused medical evacuation at the time.



Specialist Derek Gaines

*Sergeant Jamaal Golden of Bravo Company, 3-15th Infantry, provides security as the rest of his squad piles into a Bradley fighting vehicle.*



Although he was eager to get the vehicles moving and away from the confusion at Objective Curley, CPT Johnson would not give the order to move until he had checked and double-checked that all the members of Team ZAN and his rifle company were accounted for.

He was in his BFV, talking on the radio with his first sergeant, yelling over the noise, "I am not leaving this objective until I know for certain that everyone is on board! Do you understand that! I am not leaving!" (LTC Twitty). Later, a news report on the incident made much ado about the tone of voice and words he used with his first sergeant. LTC Twitty dismissed it as just one of those things that happens in life-or-death situations, as this was.

In their efforts to get mortar ammunition off the burning trucks, three members of the mortar platoon, Privates First Class White, Voua Lor and Waggner, had become isolated northeast of their platoon, unable to get back to their vehicles because of the fire and the increasingly violent explosions.

Without being told, one of the mortar squad leaders, Specialist Smith, drove his armored vehicle through the explosions and flames to their location. He did a pivot steer, turned the vehicle around smartly, dropped the ramp, and all three of the ammunition handlers piled in for the return trip.

When he had finally determined to his satisfaction that all his Soldiers were accounted for, CPT Johnson moved the remaining resupply vehicles out of the tight coil in which they had been parked and shepherded them north under the protection of his armored fighting vehicles. His timing was exquisite.

Just as he was pulling out, the lead elements of TF 2-7 Infantry were fighting their way into Objective Curley from the south. Some rounds from the lead BFVs of TF 2-7 struck the trail elements of B Company, but no one was injured and no serious damage was done to any vehicles.

CPT Johnson's column moved north, pounding fire against the Iraqi forces along the route from every vehicle, armored and wheeled. "Drivers were hunched down low in the cabs, driving with their left hand and firing their M16s out the window with their right" (LTC Twitty).

LTC Twitty realized that it was critical that the convoy not get delayed before it reached Objective Moe. He ordered CPT Johnson not to stop at Objective Larry, to keep going to Objective Moe.

"I watched Ronny Johnson and the convoy roar past us on the way to Objective Moe. It was an incredible sight! Drivers and assistant drivers were firing as fast as they could, and they were FLYING! They must have been going 50 miles an hour when they passed me. I just cheered them on" (LTC Twitty).

CPT Johnson resupplied the forces at Moe, and then escorted the remaining trucks further north to resupply Task Forces 1-64 Armor and 4-64 Armor. Later, he had to send one mechanized rifle platoon back to Objective Saints to provide security and to assist the 2nd BCT recover from the devastating missile strike against the TOC. He moved to join LTC Twitty on Objective Larry before nightfall.

After a relatively quiet night on its two remaining objectives, Task Force 3-15 Infantry fought another battle the next day, 8 April. The fighting was almost as fierce as the day before, but with the task force consolidated into a more compact defense, the Iraqis were not able to press them as hard as they had the day before. After the battle on the 8th of April, TF 3-15 Infantry consolidated around a large

Ba'ath Party complex near Objective Moe.

By the time Task Force 3-15 Infantry fought this battle in Baghdad, the Iraqis had finally learned that the U.S. could, in fact, see and fight at night. Earlier the Iraqi forces, especially the irregular Saddam Fedayeen, had often exposed themselves at night, standing in the open from 200 to 400 meters from U.S. vehicles and positions.

Of course, at that range, the thermal and image intensification sights on U.S. weapons could detect and engage them very effectively. Many Fedayeen were killed in that way early in the fighting. By the time the task force fought its major battle around Objective Peach, the Iraqi night movement and night attacks had begun to slack off (LTC Twitty). Fewer and fewer Iraqis would risk attacking U.S. forces in the dark.

By the battle of Baghdad on 7-9 April, the night attacks had ceased almost entirely. There was little or no contact around the defensive positions at night, just a little vehicle movement and the occasional burst of fire. At sunup, however, the battle would resume, "It was as if someone flipped on a light switch at dawn, and they all opened up at once!" (LTC Twitty).

#### **THE ACTIONS OF TF 2-7 INFANTRY ON OBJECTIVE CURLEY 7 APRIL 2003**

TF 2-7 Infantry, originally part of the 1st BCT, had been engaged heavily on 3 thru 5 April 2003 in fighting east of the Baghdad airport, with numerous patrols reported receiving fire and at least three Iraqi counterattacks defeated. On 5 April, the Task Force 2-7 Infantry's heavy mortar platoon fired eight significant missions, supporting all three companies with fire.

Task Force 2-7 was planning to continue its attack to the east along Highway 8 against heavy resistance when instead Brigade issued orders to conduct a relief in place with 2-187 Infantry from the 101st Air Assault Division. The intent was to give TF 2-7 Infantry at least a 24-hour rest and refit period.

LTC Scott Rutter, the task force commander, found a Special Republican Guard training compound on the airfield. It was soon cleared for use by the task force. Amenities included running water, a weight room, and most importantly, no enemy contact. Units began to move in and occupy their designated locations along what the task force called "Able Avenue."

However, duty called, and mere hours later, the task force received a mission to move to Objective Saints and secure 2nd Brigade Combat Team's lines of communication. Within four hours of notification, Task Force 2-7 left the safety and comfort of Able Avenue behind having spent only part of one night at rest. Because of the press of their duties, most leaders only got four or five hours of sleep during this refit period before they were called on to move again.

Convoying around the southwest corner of Baghdad, the task force halted at Objective Saints, the intersection of Highway 1 and Highway 8, directly south of Baghdad. Only a little earlier, the Iraqi surface-to-surface missile had struck the 2nd Brigade Combat Team TOC. When TF 2-7 Infantry arrived, smoke still rose behind the newly established TOC where the missile had impacted against a building.

With the report of the S3 injured, LTC Rutter began rapidly moving with Team RAGE to stabilize the situation. RAGE, along with LTC Rutter's track, engaged the enemy with 25mm HE fire. HQ 66





Staff Sergeant Jeremy T. Lock, USAF

*Soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Division dismount a Bradley fighting vehicle in Baghdad, Iraq, in April 2003.*

destroyed a suicide truck approaching the commanding general's vehicle, as he also happened to be there, observing the fight.

LTC Rutter, working with the FSO and the enlisted terminal attack controller (ETAC), destroyed the building the enemy had been using as a base of fire ensuring the security of that portion of 2nd BCT's LOC.

After the enemy attack at Objective Curley was squelched, at least temporarily, the Special Forces operator approached Sergeant Stephens, Major Coffey's Bradley gunner, asking what unit he was with. With a dirty face and a burning cigarette hanging from his lips, SGT Stephens proudly responded that he was with "2-7 Infantry, from 1st Brigade Combat Team."

The Special Forces operator thanked SGT Stephens, claiming without their arrival and the Bradley getting into the fight, most of the TOC personnel could have been killed. Equally thankful, the commanding general's aide thanked LTC Rutter for his crew's quick destruction of the suicide truck.

That evening (7 April) the task force began to expand off the road network to ensure security of the Lines of Communication, working for 2nd BCT along Highway 8 in southern Baghdad.

Companies moved into sector KNIGHT at Objective Larry, RAGE in the north on Objective Moe and BUSHMASTER in the south at Objective Curley. Large walls surrounded every building and the combat engineers with Task Force 2-7 Infantry began the arduous task of knocking down walls to clear sectors of fire and eliminate possible ambush sites.

As the armored combat earthmovers punched holes in the wall, Bradleys and M1s provided security. At Objective Moe, an ACE breached a wall and opened a hole directly in front of an Iraqi RPG team and an Iraqi armored vehicle. Hearing the heavy engineer vehicle pounding the wall, the enemy Infantry had prepared to ambush the unsuspecting Americans.

Staff Sergeant Lincoln Hollinsaid, the engineer platoon sergeant, guided the ACE through the wall and took the brunt of the first RPG impact. The rocket exploded at his feet and SSG Hollinsaid sustained extensive injuries to his legs. He died within minutes.

His death hit the task force extremely hard; he had replaced Sergeant First Class Paul Smith who had been killed in similar circumstances three days earlier at the Baghdad airport. In four days, this engineer platoon lost two platoon sergeants.

The Iraqi soldiers were preparing to attack RAGE when SSG Hollinsaid was killed. Had the engineers not located and killed the Iraqi soldiers, many more task force Soldiers could have perished in the enemy attack. The Iraqis could have sneaked up on RAGE, heavily armed with RPGs and automatic rifles. Later in the evening, around the overpass area, RAGE engaged and destroyed four BMPs and about 20 enemy Infantry with no friendly casualties.

Despite the loss of SSG Hollinsaid, more work needed to be done and combat pauses for nothing. Hours later, in the middle of the night, north of RAGE in KNIGHT's sector, engineers continued knocking down walls and clearing sectors of fire. An ACE

punched through a wall and pulled forward, moving along the inside of the wall. Creeping forward, the vehicle flushed an Iraqi from his hiding place. Darting across the road, he hopped over the wall.

Using their thermal sights, a tank positioned outside the compound identified the armed Iraqi scaling down the wall and fired at him. The main gun round killed the enemy soldier and punched into the wall. The explosive round blew through the wall, spraying the armored combat earthmover with shrapnel and chunks of the wall.

Fragments ricocheted off the blade, striking the driver, Private First Class Jason Meyer, in the neck, killing him instantly. The tank crew was unaware the American vehicle was behind the wall, and would not have shot had they known.

It was a saddened but grimly determined group of Soldiers from TF 2-7 Infantry and TF 3-15 Infantry that watched the sun rising over Baghdad on the morning of 8 April. They had fought a determined and fanatical enemy to a standstill. They had taken and held all their objectives, absorbing the enemy's heaviest blows without breaking.

As the sun came up that day on the 3rd Infantry Division, it was setting on Saddam Hussein's murderous regime, set by the brave Soldiers of the Marne Division and their comrades-in-arms that were crushing the tyrants forces wherever they found them.

---

**Arthur A. Durante** is currently serving as deputy chief of Doctrine, Doctrine and Collective Training Division, Combined Arms and Tactics Directorate, Fort Benning, Georgia.

---



# Media on the Battlefield

## "A Nonlethal Fire"

CAPTAIN DAVID CONNOLLY

**Editor's Note:** *Public Affairs and the media played a key role in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). This operation proved that now more than ever, the U.S. military must be prepared to engage the media and provide timely, factual information. This article shares some experiences with the media during Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and the early stages of OIF. The intent is to explain, from a company/field grade point of view, how media played a part in the operations and how our tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) related to current doctrine. It will also share thoughts on how field grade officers can prepare themselves to conduct media interviews in today's environment. At this time, it is uncertain how doctrine will change as a result of our lessons learned.*

*The author, Captain David Connolly, was assigned to Third U.S. Army, Coalition Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) as the media relations officer from August 2002 to July 2003. During that time, he supported OEF in Kuwait and Djibouti, Horn of Africa. He was then involved in the planning and execution of OIF to include the embedded media initiative.*

Former Chief of Staff of the Army, General Eric Shinseki, once said, "If we do not speak for the Army, others will." This is a very true statement. The media should be considered as a component of nonlethal fires/non-kinetic targeting, another tool at our disposal to help accomplish the mission. The media will write their stories, with or without our input. It only makes sense to engage the media to ensure the whole story is told. The media is a venue in which we can pass along our command messages, which

contain truthful and factual information. The bottom line is that we should always keep in mind what we are there to do. Always remember the Soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines that are on the ground sacrificing every day. If we can help their morale and ultimately make their job easier by using the media, we should. It is safe to say that 99 times out of 100, we — the members of the U.S. military — are acting with the right intentions. Meaning, we have nothing to hide. We have been given our orders and are attempting to carry them out within laws of land warfare. But bad things happen in war. Not everything goes our way. During these times it is best to confront the media and articulate to the world our side of the story.

When integrated and synchronized with Information Operations (IO) efforts, Public Affairs and in particular, the media, can be a force multiplier. In CFLCC prior to crossing the LD, the Public Affairs (PA) staff leveraged the IO themes and messages to the fullest extent possible. It is important to understand the difference between IO and PA, however. Basically IO and PA belong to the same career field, Information Operations. One difference is that IO can use deception and specifically target the enemy. Public Affairs must be aware what themes and messages that IO is pushing during each phase of the operation. The intent is to leverage IO. During the initial phases of OIF, CFLCC always ensured that Public Affairs planners were involved in the Information Operations Working Groups (IOWG). This ensured they were involved in the effects targeting board process. In that case, they could bring that information to the media director. The media director would then have a clear picture of what the commander's intent was and what the staff was attempting to accomplish. Armed with

this knowledge the media director could prioritize which of the thousands of media queries to work on while maintaining a level of fairness and equity to all reporters. As an example, prior to crossing the line of departure (LD), IO was pushing themes to the enemy concerning capitulation. Knowing this, the media director could push reporters out to units responsible for dealing with large numbers of enemy prisoners of war (EPWs). These types of stories would send a message to the enemy and the world. The enemy would see how they would be fed, clothed, and provided shelter. Capitulation might appear to be a good option given their current status. The world would see that we were trained and ready.

We should cooperate with the media within the limits of mission, safety, and operations security (OPSEC). There is always a tendency to over-classify information to avoid speaking to the media. There are essentially two things you always want to protect: timing and intentions. You must always ask yourself if the information that you are providing to the media will give an adversary something that they can use against us.

If OPSEC or safety concerns make it impossible to support a media request, then simply tell them so. Today's graphics may be classified, but once you have crossed that phase line or the information can no longer be used against you, they probably are no longer a secret. You still have to be responsible with information. The reporter must understand when he/she can write or speak about what they see. We were very successful during the decisive combat phase of OIF allowing reporters access to command centers. The practice of allowing reporters in command centers will be elaborated upon later when embedded







Staff Sergeant Jeffrey A. Wolfe

*Minutes after gunfire interrupted a demonstration in downtown Kirkuk, Iraq, Major Douglas Vincent of the 173rd Airborne Brigade is interviewed by a local reporter.*

reporters are discussed in detail. This is always a sensitive area.

“Go ugly early” is a term sometimes used in Public Affairs. Bad things happen in war. Again, not everything goes our way. We had nearly 700 embedded reporters with units prior to crossing the LD. They saw and heard everything. There were many times when something bad happened, and Soldiers were unsure how to respond when a reporter was on the scene. One case occurred early in the war near the Umm Qasr area. Some civilians had been injured by Coalition fire. A CNN embedded reporter captured the scene as British and U.S. troops attended to the injured. Initially Soldiers shouted at the reporter to get back and not be “such a ghoul.” Eventually cooler heads prevailed, and they allowed the reporter to continue to film as long as he remained out of the way. The images of the Soldier’s faces told the story. They were concerned that they had injured innocent civilians on the battlefield. The film showed that the primary concern at that point was to provide medical attention — the same care we would give to a Coalition Soldier. The embedded reporter had a right to be there to do his job, which was to report our activity. We could have gained even more leverage by engaging the reporter (by way of short stand-up interview) with a leader on the scene who could have released known information and delivered a command message. The message could have included the sympathy for the injured and how we make every attempt to avoid these things from happening followed by basic, releasable facts that were known. Coupled with the images, the world would understand the situation and not have only part of the story told or taken out of context.

We must now, more than ever be able to articulate our story on the spot without violating OPSEC. In order to do this, we must incorporate Public Affairs training at home station.

The best-case scenario is when Soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines are the spokespersons, not the PAO. All Soldiers must be prepared to answer questions pertaining to his or her area of

ugly. The reporters also learned how to do their job in the harsh desert conditions. They began to learn how their equipment would work, how to move with a unit, etc. The benefit from this experience was evident when they crossed the LD with the embeds. There were very few problems regarding the new relationship. Following the relief in place (RIP) in Baghdad between 1st Armored Division and 3rd ID, however, we immediately began getting several complaints about reporters having their cameras taken away and not being allowed to do their job. This may have happened for several reasons. 1st AD did not have the benefit of the training embed program. It appeared that 1st AD had trouble initially dealing with the volume of reporters. Even though by this time, there were relatively fewer embeds, there was still hundreds of reporters present.

As stated earlier, training and experience dealing with the media weren’t the only issues. Initially, we did not have a Coalition Press Information Center (CPIC) established in Baghdad. There were problems with reporters using press badges issued in Kuwait and attempting to get through checkpoints with them in Baghdad. There were two types of badges issued in Kuwait. One for embeds and the other for those who were not. The badges issued to non-embeds in Kuwait were not intended for use in Iraq. They were only to be used during coordinated opportunities through the Kuwait CPIC.

The decision on whether or not to badge is debatable. CFLCC made a conscious decision not to badge in Baghdad initially. Reporters knew their way around the city. They didn’t desire or need PAO escort. At that time, they only needed information on where to go to cover certain activities. On one hand, badges issued by the Coalition at least show Soldiers on the ground that this person has at least been through some sort of formal registry process with the military. On the other hand, badges can be badly abused by reporters. Initially in Baghdad, they became the “get into every checkpoint free pass.” At this point, many reporters

responsibility. The 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized) had the benefit of receiving a great deal of training prior to crossing the LD. During a rotation for Operation Desert Spring (ODS) in the fall of 2002, we began what we called “training embeds.” We knew that if we went to war with Iraq we were going to embed hundreds of reporters like never before. Reporters were embedded with units for three to four-day periods. This gave the Soldiers an opportunity to get used to having reporters present 24/7 as they carried out their duties. They got used to the presence of reporters and learned how to deal with them. The reporters saw it all, the good, the bad, and the



and affiliates were tired of having their freedom of movement dictated by the military. That is one reason they chose to leave their embed slots. In some cases, it was apparent that the reporters wanted a badge in Iraq to make moving around easier, not to be escorted or coordinate opportunities. Some of the reporters in Iraq had not registered through Kuwait previously. As time went on and a CPIC was established, badges were once again issued and controlled. We failed to predict the early mass exodus of embeds once a few statues fell.

### Preparing for Interviews

Preparing to conduct media interviews is a skill required of today's military members. For most of us, there are two types of interviews to be prepared for: the taped, stand-up interview and the print interview. During these types of interviews, no one hears the question, only the response. Press conferences are usually reserved for those higher in the chain of command. Press conferences are unique in that the audience hears the question as well as the response. The preparation for all types of interviews remains essentially the same however.

Preparing for an interview is basically a negotiation. Stress to the reporter your need for information before you begin. Remember, the media can be a nonlethal fire. Ask yourself what the story can do for your unit, the mission. Think about what phase of the operation you are in. What themes and messages is IO pushing? How does this story help leverage them? Is this the right time to do the story? Remember to protect timing and intentions. For example, in Kuwait prior to crossing the LD, you might not want to do a story about how you are going to fight oil well fires. Don't give the enemy that information yet. After you cross the LD and have passed that phase, go for it. Many reporters will want "fluff" stories. Those are fine, but given the choice, prioritize stories depending on what phase of the operation you are in. If you haven't crossed the LD yet, a story about Soldiers

training in the desert should be given emphasis over one about women in the Army. Remember, you can send a message to the world and the enemy that you are trained and ready. You can do a story about women in the Army, or whatever requests a reporter has, later. Be polite, honest, helpful, and friendly to journalists, but remember the mission and Soldiers on the ground. How can you help them?

When preparing for an interview, do what you do in other military operations: gather intel. Ask questions like "what is the story about?" Know what angle reporters are after. What aspects of a subject are they after? Who else are they talking to? You may have to augment information they are already getting. Sometimes, if you know whom else they spoke to previously you may have to refute information. How knowledgeable are the reporters on the subject? What do they know about the military? You may have to educate them. What type of stories do these reporters typically write? Are they pro or anti-military? War? Gather background information on them, get their bios.

Consider asking the journalist to send you his/her questions. They won't give you everything, but what you are looking for is the focus area. You may have to gather facts from the rest of the subject matter experts (SMEs) on the staff to help you articulate our side or the rest of the story. Remember, you want the media to walk away with the whole story and our messages. Asking for questions also helps you prepare for what might be asked during the interview. You should sit down and brainstorm every question that you think might be asked. Especially, the hard ones. What question do you **not** want to be asked and be unprepared for? You have to have a response for all questions.

If you can't do the interview tell them why. More times than not, they will understand. For example, in Baghdad a CBS crew had gotten wind of what they thought was an effort to find a pilot downed in the 1991 Gulf War. CFLCC would often get off-the-wall requests like this, but after some investigation, it was learned that, in this particular case, it was true; a team was investigating



*Colonel Anthony Cucolo, deputy commanding general of Combined Joint Task Force 180, meets with local media after a meeting in Afghanistan in March 2004. The meeting was held to improve political and military relations between the Pakistan and Afghanistan militaries near the border.*

Sergeant First Class Sandra Watkins-Keough



the whereabouts of missing Navy Commander Michael Scott Speicher. For obvious reasons (timing and intentions), they could not do the story at that time because it would jeopardize their investigation. After a meeting between the CBS crew and investigating team, agreements were made to wait until such time as the information could be released without affecting the investigation.

Never get out in front of the President or DoD. Know what senior leaders are saying about your operation. This helps you anticipate questions. Public Affairs Guidance (PAG), also called "PAO by transcript," is sometimes used. If you have access to the Internet, review recent DoD transcripts. Chances are the same questions will be asked at your level. You don't have to regurgitate the Secretary of Defense's responses, but you can ensure that your messages are in line and focused on how things are from your foxhole. Military leaders must be aware of what is being said to avoid being taken out of context. For example, if the President said yesterday "there are indications that foreign fighters are involved in conducting these attacks" and you say, "We have no indications of foreign fighter involvement." It would appear that you are not on the same sheet of music. If you knew what the President's statement was, you could have rephrased your response to more accurately articulate your message. Maybe, in your specific area of responsibility (AOR) there are no indications of foreign fighters. The President is speaking for the entire country. You could have said, "In our area, there are no indications..." This way, you might avoid being taken out of context.

Know your current events. If you are doing an interview tomorrow, what happened in the news today that relates? How does that event impact what you are going to talk about? Remember, you are the expert to some journalists no matter what the topic. Stay in your lane and speak only about what you know about.

### Conducting the Interview

The interview itself is all about control. You want it, the reporter wants it. You have to learn how to structure effective answers and control the interview. Don't be question driven, be

message driven. The trick is to use your messages as guideposts and not repeated phrases. This is where the skill comes in. Everyone gets annoyed when they see someone on TV that sounds like they are a robot who continues to press rewind and then play over and over again. Those people lose credibility and appear never to actually answer anything. Some people can transition and flow well, some can't. It takes a certain amount of preparation and experience. You should be trying to articulate some command messages that will positively influence the outcome of your mission. Use the media as a nonlethal fire. Help raise the morale of that young E-4 on the checkpoint. If you have the information, and it is releasable, by all means give it. But consider what other information you need to deliver to tell the rest of the story.

For the purpose of this article, the focus will be on stand-up, taped interviews where the question is never heard. This will be a situation many of us will more than likely be involved in.

**Structuring effective answers.** As stated previously, you are engaging the media not only to respond to their questions, but also to deliver a message about your mission that is important for the world to understand. Again, you must constantly ask yourself how you can help the Soldiers on the ground by providing information to the media. To do this, you need to structure effective answers or responses. You should come to the interview with about three or four messages that you want to deliver. Think of each

message as a pyramid (see Figure 1).

At the top of the pyramid, you should **state your message**. This is your response to the first question. And for a taped stand-up interview, it doesn't matter what the question is. You should deliver your most important message first. So, if you are interrupted later, it is already out there. Nobody will hear the question on a taped interview. Many times even if a journalist came to you with a specific question in mind, if you deliver a clearly articulated message, they will use it. You may tell them something that they didn't know. It may look and sound so good on tape that the affiliate's editors desire to use it as their sound bite.

For the many skeptics out there that will say this would never work, here is an example. Memorial Day was a bad day. The Coalition had some incidents in and around Fallujah. A number of Soldiers had lost their lives. About this time it was already clear that the media was tending to focus on things that went wrong, almost ignoring many details about the good things that were continuing to happen. Daily they would receive two news releases filled with facts and statistics about recovery and security. Yet, if one ambush or fatality occurred, that was all the public heard about. Who know the reason why, you can probably guess; maybe it was sensationalism, politically driven from their bureaus, whatever. CFLCC Commander Lieutenant General David D. McKiernan was painfully aware that this was happening as well. After the evening battle update assessment (BUA), he was providing the staff with some guidance.

He told them that they must all become a public affairs officer and get this message out. He asked the staff, "What did we come here to do?" After a short silence, he started talking about the mission's objectives: removing the regime, searching for and eliminating weapons of mass destruction (WMD), etc. His basic message was "We are not done yet." We were only weeks into what we knew would be a long tough campaign, and it was important to him that the world knew this. We were prepared to hunker down and expected that these weren't the first or the last casualties we would endure.

The CG at this time was back in Kuwait. I, as the CFLCC media director,

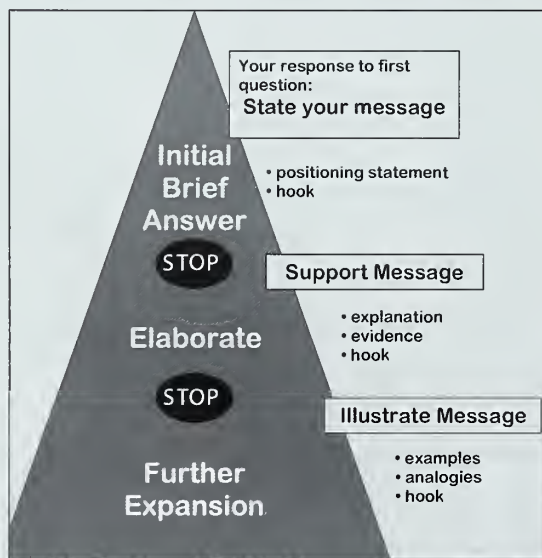


Figure 1



was watching the BUA from our van in Baghdad. At this time, we still didn't have a CPIC established. I usually would meet reporters at the Baghdad convention center and attempt to field their queries. So, I knew the next morning what the focus of their queries would be, and I knew what the CG's message was. Normally as a PAO, I would not go on camera, but when it is important, it doesn't hurt. I didn't have time to prepare or even have access to a commander or other key leader. Bottom line was that time was of the essence, and I had what I had: me and a notebook, which I had scribbled notes on as the CG spoke. Early the next morning, one of our Marine PAOs and I finalized a position statement, based directly from the CG's comments. I ran it by my boss, the CFLCC PAO, who said go for it.

The first call came from Associated Press Television (APTN) I think. They called me and asked, "What happened at Fallujah?" I gave my statement and never mentioned any facts of any specific incident at Fallujah. They quickly said thanks and packed up and ran. They wanted to be the first, the exclusive. Next came CNN, Reuters, all with international audiences. Only Reuters asked a follow-up, "OK, got that, but can you tell me what happened at Fallujah." After everyone was running the position statement, they needed and wanted the rest of the story, which I then gave out because I had the information and it was releasable. The important thing is that the world heard, first thing in the morning, what the CG wanted them to hear. When my segments aired, everyone remembered where he or she heard those words. "Isn't that what the CG said last night?" Exactly! My point is that it doesn't take a PAO to do this. Anyone listening could have done the same thing. Being a PAO and having other good PAOs from our sister services and Coalition partners around me helped accomplish the mission. Know what is important to your commander. Know the message.

After delivering your message, you then need to **support your message**. In the middle of the pyramid, you elaborate on your position statement. Provide an explanation, evidence that supports your initial statement. At this point, provide facts, key stats, description of a certain program, or a supporting argument or rationale. For example, if you are supporting a statement you made about what you are doing in Western Iraq, you can talk about how many patrols you have conducted, number of arrests made, or how much food or water was delivered. If your position statement said that you are doing great and wonderful things winning hearts and minds, back it up with the facts that the media may have overlooked.

At the bottom of the pyramid, you further expand. Here you illustrate your message. Give a prepared example or analogy. If using the example above, tell them about a specific raid in one of the towns.

During this entire process, your goal is to be in control of the interview. Have them follow you. **Hook** the reporter's interest. Be passionate about what you are talking about. Usually you can have a reporter follow you through one message or pyramid. The skill comes in when you can bridge to a second or third message. The goal is to smoothly transition to your messages so you don't sound like an idiot or a parrot repeating things over and over. This takes practice and experience and sometimes a bit of charm. One key leader that comes to mind is Colin Powell. He uses textbook communication skills both during speeches and while

talking with reporters. He transitions so fluidly, the untrained eye may not notice. The fact is, he effectively communicates his messages and avoids losing credibility by sounding like a robot. You have to continually bridge back to your messages. The hard part is to always be aware of which questions are out of your lane. The tendency is to attempt to answer any and all questions. The key is to first think about what is being asked. If it's not for you to answer, get them back on track by saying, "I don't know about that, but what I can tell you is..." or "DoD might have more information on that, but the important thing to remember is...". Control the interview. Flag or spotlight your message with phrases like "First, let's clarify the facts..." or "Let's look at what is really important...".

The hook is a tool you use to effectively control the interview. You want the reporter to follow you. The pyramid will tell you to briefly stop between your initial answer and elaboration. What that means is to offer a statement like, "You should have seen what happened yesterday.." or "We have this new approach...." Then pause briefly enough time so the reporter can ask, "Well, what's that?" I realize that this won't work that easily every time especially, with savvy reporters. But, you get the idea. You want the control.

## Embeds

During the decisive combat phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom, CFLCC embedded an unprecedented number of reporters. It is debatable whether or not this is the way of the future or not. It remains to be seen how the military will deploy embedded reporters in the future. We may never embed reporters in the numbers seen during OIF. The affiliates have a say in the issue as well. They need to commit resources to the idea as much as anybody. The notion of embedding from "beginning to end" never really materialized. Many reporters dis-embedded themselves for different reasons soon after arriving in Baghdad or shortly thereafter. Some left simply because they were exhausted, mentally and physically. They had seen a lot of action. And in some cases, seen fellow journalists killed or wounded. Embedding during decisive combat was a good deal. They didn't seem to mind the structure and limited freedom of movement (between units). They enjoyed a certain sense of security, especially when facing many unknown circumstances. Once decisive combat was declared over, many journalists and their affiliates decided it was time to dis-embed. Some took pressure from colleagues who called them "turncoats" or accused them of losing their objectivity. They desired to go back to "real" reporting.

Embeds worked for us because many did assimilate to the military. No longer did they report "they just did this," rather they started saying "we just did this." They became part of the unit. They saw that human beings who cared about their actions fought the war. They saw that even when things went bad, the military members went out of their way to do the right thing, many times at risk to their own safety.

Embeds saw things that we have been saying for years but could never really prove. They saw that we care about limiting collateral damage. They saw in command posts, hundreds of minds struggling all night over target lists and the effects of striking specific targets. They saw the amount of thought and work



involved in deciding on each and every target. We didn't simply "carpet bomb" Baghdad or target every single power source. We took a look at the effect of each location to be hit and if striking that target would achieve the desired effect. They saw Soldiers put their own lives in danger to save the lives of civilians on the battlefield. There was a reporter from the Associated Press who was embedded with the 3rd ID during its "Thunder Run" into Baghdad. This reporter was in a tank within the column and was given a headset. Every intersection was heavily defended. The roads were crowded with everything from uniformed enemy soldiers, to combatants in civilian

clothes in technical trucks, to average citizens going about their business. The fighting was very aggressive. Soldiers and leaders all where fighting outside the hatch with M16s, M4s, and sometimes beating people off their vehicles with ammo cans. With this happening, lead vehicles were still passing information like "Blue car, bad guys with RPG; white car, family of four, let them go." The reporter simply could not believe this. You can tell someone about it, but unless you show them, they may never believe you.

Getting back to the future of embeds, there are two thoughts: one is that we are currently riding a wave of popularity with the media. We are in their favor, for now. Things may go back to a certain level of tolerance with each other. But what we have accomplished with embeds can continue. Many of the embedded reporters were young, 20 or 30 somethings. They were some of the best and brightest that their affiliate had to offer. They will be the leaders of their organizations some day. They may be the anchors, or key leaders who can advise the bureau chiefs on military-related matters. Already some who previously were relatively unknown, are working the weekend anchor slots. These reporters saw for themselves and have



*Embedded photojournalist David Kamerman of the Boston Globe watches a couple of 1st Armored Division Soldiers March 12, 2003, in Kuwait.*

developed a certain understanding, respect, and rapport with us that can continue for years to come.

Another thing we learned by embedding hundreds of reporters is that the rate of information had drastically increased. We didn't fully appreciate how much information would be out before it went through the official reporting chain. We still had to be responsible with information and not officially "release" it until it was confirmed and on the significant actions (SIGACTS) report. There was a lot of pressure to confirm things, which we simply couldn't do on the spot. We had to accept that they were out there and let them report. We would still handle information in the same manner. Once it was confirmed, we would acknowledge. If unconfirmed, we would either refute or simply state that to our knowledge, it didn't happen.

The way in which we released or articulated information had also changed. We now, more than ever, had to confirm the obvious. There was a young Soldier who apparently shot himself in a porta potty in one of the camps in Kuwait before we crossed the LD. We had just recently embedded reporters in the units. When the release was written, it stated something to

the effect, "A Soldier has died from an apparent, self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head." CENTCOM asked why we chose those words. We never used those words strongly speculating a suicide, but we never had a FOX reporter as the first person on the scene either. The reporter heard the shot and was standing right there when the door was opened. One Soldier, one weapon, and a gunshot wound to the head. Apparently, he died of a self-inflicted wound. We didn't say that he killed himself. The investigation would reveal what happened. The point is that we all realized at that moment

that the game was different. If we didn't confirm the obvious up front, we would have lost a certain amount of credibility.

I think it is useful to understand how embeds were deployed. For OIF it worked like this: DoD asked CFLCC how many reporters they could handle given the task organization. CFLCC worked with subordinate PAOs to work out specific numbers. CFLCC then provided DoD with a number. DoD took the number and allocated slots to specific affiliates and media organizations. Those affiliates and organizations assigned personnel to fill the slots. Not all the reporters assigned as embeds wanted the slot. Some had been in the AOR for months and benefited from the training embeds. Some had never been there at all. Between DoD and CFLCC, the best attempt was made to ensure the right reporters and media types were in the right place. There was a mix of different categories of media spread out amongst the task force (print, TV, weekly magazines, regional/Arab media, etc). Subordinate commands had input if they desired a specific anchor or reporter to embed with their headquarters. Some had already built a good rapport with individuals through training. The DoD embed list assigned reporters down to division level. Divisions



then pushed them down, at times, to company level.

Some are very passionate to disagree with letting reporters in command centers without a security clearance. It is safe to say that it was proven that we can do this without violating OPSEC by establishing strict ground rules while still being responsible with information. Some have said, "We give away too much about our capabilities by letting in civilians without clearances." One example given is that reporters learn too much about how far and fast we can go. We give this away by doing it. After we cross the LD and execute, everybody knows our capability. What we must protect are our TTPs and information that we will use again in the future. Just because a reporter is let into a command center doesn't mean that you show them every secret in the book. You must still be responsible with information. It is challenging but doable. Again, we need to get away from the tendency to over-classify while still protecting sensitive information that should remain classified even after the current fight is over. It is a balancing act that requires thought. Security at the source requires that each individual understand the difference. Be conscious of what information you are providing and the situation at the time you are providing it. Once more, protect timing, intentions, and anything that an adversary can use against us.

**Ground Rules.** All reporters who desire access to our forces are required to agree to ground rules whether they are embedded or not. Most will abide by them because they want to continue to have access to our forces. Enforcing the ground rules is sometimes difficult. As mentioned, once embeds were pushed down to the units, before you knew it, there was some poor company executive officer (XO) who had the additional duty of "baby-sitting" a reporter. Security at the source was the rule. It became impossible to watch a reporter 24/7. It was especially dangerous when reporters had satellite phones and the capability to go live at any moment. Geraldo Rivera is a prime example. He went live on air and basically violated everything you would normally protect: timing, intentions, and things an adversary can use against you. He was embedded with the 101st Airborne Division while they were on the move toward Baghdad. He scratched out a sketch in the sand that showed their formation, where they were, how far and fast they had traveled, and when they would be at their next location. V Corps immediately notified CFLCC and asked to pull him, which was CFLCC initiated. The 101st, who did not have the benefit of live television, was upset because, "he was their man." Say what you will about Geraldo, but he is great for morale. That was apparent even when he came to Kuwait for a meeting on Camp Doha to plead for a late embed slot. Even lieutenant colonels and colonels would light up at the site of him. He was a nice break from endless hours of tedious staff work and operations orders. Not many reporters drew that sort of reaction. His incident with the 101st was an example of the difficulty in watching a reporter 24/7. He was eventually pulled, knowing he would go back because the division wanted him back. This was after a heartfelt apology, of course. Luckily, it did not appear that his actions ever got anyone killed.

Units can always add to ground rules that reporters sign with the higher headquarters, in this case, CFLCC. One good one would be to instruct the reporter never to go live unless there is a Soldier or "handler" present. This would have worked well in the Geraldo situation. Depending on the reporter, they may have good intentions and just not realize that a certain piece of information may be sensitive at the time. Remember, reporters are just like Soldiers in that there are good ones, bad ones, experienced, and even not so high speed. You have to train them and set the standard of conduct at your level.

No ground rule is foolproof. If it is in writing, we must live with it. One of the CFLCC ground rules stated that no image or photograph would be taken of a deceased Coalition Soldier. LTG McKiernan felt strongly about this ground rule. He did not want family members to learn of their loved ones fate in the media. There was much debate with DoD of whether or not it should be a ground rule. *Army Times* had a photograph of a young 101st Soldier who was badly wounded and was being carried by his comrades. He later died. The first reaction to *Army*

*Times* was, "You can't run that photo, it violates the ground rules." They took the position that they were not violating a ground rule because the Soldier was "dying" and at the time of the photo was not dead. Even after CFLCC and the Soldier's family pleaded that they not run the photo, they did. We dis-embedded four journalists and two photographers because the intent of the ground rule was on publication of the



photograph. This was obviously an editorial position taken by Times Publishing. As a result, all Times Publishing employees were dis-embedded for one week. DoD did not re-embed them, CFLCC did. To be fair, one of the journalists and one of the photographers were leaving anyway. Of the remaining three, we allowed one to go back to a unit. It was not the person who took the photograph. The other recourse that was taken was to have the paper publish a letter to the editor from LTG McKiernan. It wasn't as effective since they did not have to print his last line, which stated that he and hopefully nobody he ever associates with ever buys another copy of the *Army Times*. So, even when you think a ground rule is self-explanatory or simply in good taste, be sure if they are in writing to articulate your intentions in detail.

Dealing with media effectively requires training and experience like anything else. You won't personally like every reporter you encounter. You must be able to put your personal feelings aside and get on with your mission and allow them to do theirs. When encountering the media, you should always ask yourself how you can use this nonlethal fire to help accomplish the mission and most importantly, how to assist the Soldier on the ground at the checkpoint or on patrol.

---

**Captain David Connolly** is currently assigned to Fort Leavenworth in the Center for Army Tactics, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. At the college, he has had the opportunity to address students on this topic in an elective course, "Media on the Battlefield."

---



# A QUICK REACTION PLATOON ENGAGES IRAQI INSURGENTS

FIRST LIEUTENANT TIMOTHY MEADORS

**Editor's Note:** *The author, First Lieutenant Timothy Meadors, was assigned as the platoon leader of 3rd Platoon, A Company, 2nd Battalion, 8th Infantry, 4th Infantry Division, during the unit's deployment as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The following is a detailed description of one of his platoon's missions in Iraq.*

*"Wolf Pack 1, this is Wolf Pack 2, identified one RPG."  
"Wolf Pack 2, this is Wolf Pack 1, roger, engage."*

While serving as platoon leader of my battalion's Quick Reaction Platoon, I was tasked with conducting a security patrol in the city of Muqdadiah, Iraq, in order to provide a Coalition presence in the city during hours of limited visibility as well as destroy any enemy factions if possible.

Within the platoon these patrols are treated as movements to contact due to the probability of encountering an improvised explosive device (IED) or a direct fire engagement. The platoon's movement was over familiar terrain on a paved road that runs east and west with berms on the northern side of the road. Our intelligence indicated that the berms on our route were used as unsuccessful ambush sights over the past few months. As the column of four M2A3 Bradley fighting vehicles (BFVs) with three Infantry squads loaded in the rear patrolled the area, the lead section made a southern turn on a elevated unimproved road. Following the turn, the trail vehicle, scanning the rear of the column, observed four personnel tactically maneuvering along a berm on the northern side of the road that extended approximately 200 meters. The report came to me and I realized I was in visual contact with a possible enemy.

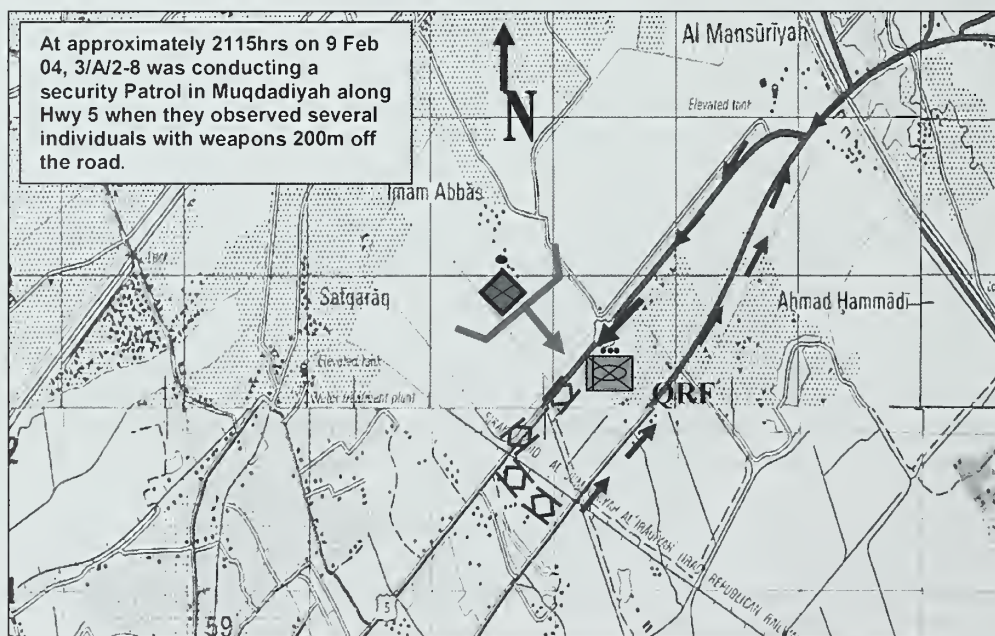
From previous engagements I knew the enemy's normal actions while in contact are to:

- ☐ Rapidly engage the target with their entire arsenal of weapons, and
- ☐ Egress on a covered and concealed route.

Due to the likelihood of an enemy presence as well as the need to maintain contact with the personnel behind the berm, the trail section of Bradleys remained in visual contact with the

possible enemy. The lead section broke contact to quickly maneuver to a position that allowed for better observation on what would likely become the engagement area. The narrowness of the road prevented the lead section from pivoting in place. Additionally, attempting to reverse the Bradleys would have been time consuming due to the limited visibility and the elevation of the road. The terrain dictated that the fastest movement would be to quickly go to the road south of our current route and retrace our route.

The trail section maintained visual contact with the personnel on the ground. The individuals began an attempt to egress; however their movement away from the berm was surprisingly slow. At this point, the BFVs did not identify any weapons. As the lead section regained contact with the trail section and the possible enemy, we began to build the engagement area that allowed the BFVs to fix the possible enemy in place and prevent them from finding any cover or concealment within the engagement area. Maneuvering to the north of the road proved difficult due to a significant canal between the road and the berm. However, we located a bypass that enabled the Bradleys to move north and establish an attack-by-fire position. A visual read of the terrain dictated the establishment of a classic "L" shaped ambush formation. The terrain prevented further movement of the Bradleys toward the suspicious personnel, and any movement away from the established positions would degrade observation of the area. Additionally, the positioning of the BFVs in this formation denied any access into or out of the cordon without





**The discovery of the hostile weapon classified the men as enemy and met the criteria to initiate direct fires onto the targets in the engagement area.**

observation. The orientation of the turrets for each BFV was directly onto the engagement area. Using the Commander Independent Viewer (CIV) allowed us to secure the rear and flanks of the position. The platoon continued to observe the area during the maneuver and identified six personnel low crawling near the berm. The berm provided them cover from the section of Bradleys on the road south of the berm; however, the Bradley section north of the road had visibility on the individuals. The northern most Bradley provided observation for any northerly movement. Likewise, the eastern most Bradley provided observation for anyone fleeing to the east. The cordon was set and the engagement area was established. Due to the composition of the cordon, direct fire control measures had to be very strict. Failure to adhere to the assigned sectors increased the possibility of fratricide. The berm provided a notable terrain feature within the engagement area. An additional piece of high ground on the eastern side of the engagement area was a distinguishable feature and served as a target reference point (TRP) (Figure 1).

At this point, no fires had been exchanged and the personnel on the ground had yet to be identified as enemy. Their behavior was very suspicious, and as we observed their movement following the establishment of the cordon it became apparent that they were most likely enemy. Nonetheless, the SOP for the battalion did not allow for an engagement without the identification of an RPK (a Russian-made machine gun) weapon system or higher. Tactical patience became the norm as we made use of the Bradleys' highly sophisticated sighting systems, the Improved Bradley Acquisition System (IBAS), and the CIV. This tactical pause allowed for increased security of the area as well as an opportunity for me to provide a detailed report to my chain of command. Using the SALT-Y (situation, activity, location, time, and your actions) format, I was able to paint an accurate picture for my higher and receive further guidance. I was advised to show constraint as much as

possible until I could positively identify a hostile weapon. Additionally, I was reminded of the rules of engagement (ROE) regarding enemy engagements. The ROE allows for continued direct fires on identified enemy until they surrender. As the situation developed, we observed two additional individuals within the original six-man cluster on the ground. The eight-man group had yet to be identified as hostile and had yet to surrender.

A five-minute exercise in tactical patience concluded with the positive identification of one individual with a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) in the group of eight-men now attempting to crawl away from the area. The men had moved toward our established TRP, the high point of the objective. The discovery of the hostile weapon classified the men as enemy and met the criteria to initiate direct fires onto the targets in the engagement area. With the cordon set, the engagement area established, and the direct fire sectors assigned, the M242 25mm automatic gun and the M240C machine gun delivered a direct fire assault onto the enemy. We engaged the enemy position with a high volume of 25mm high explosive (HE) rounds and 7.62 mm rounds from the

M240C. In our area of responsibility, we learned from previous engagements that using the 25mm at close range proved highly effective in destroying covered enemy positions. As previously mentioned, the enemy normally fires quickly and uses a covered and concealed route to egress. The 25mm HE rounds provide destructive fire to impede the enemy's exfiltration and inflict casualties. The berm within the engagement area degraded the effect of the 7.62 mm rounds. The mixture of both types of ammunitions rendered the cover of the berm useless.

Once the cease-fire command was given, one of the tracks observed two personnel moving behind the cover of another berm. Reinitiating fires did not draw the men out and no one could confirm the destruction of the men. Our direct fires became fixing fires to prevent the enemy from escaping the area. The northern most BFV provided an overwatch position to the direct east and was ready to engage with fixing fires if anyone tried to evade to the north. The eastern most BFV provided an overwatch position to the direct north and was ready to engage with fixing fires if anyone tried to evade to the east. The inner Bradleys provided fixing fires onto the engagement area to fix the enemy in the immediate area.

The main effort of the engagement now transitioned from the Bradleys to the Infantry squads. The Bradleys were able to count six bodies from the initial engagement as probable killed in action

Figure 1





(KIA). The two additional bodies were fixed in place, but at this time we were unsure of their status. We continued to classify these two personnel as hostile due to their continued attempt to evade U.S. forces and their refusal to surrender.

The three Infantry squads dismounted to clear the area. The distance between the Bradleys prevented an immediate link up of the three squads. From the turret of my Bradley, I was able to direct the lead squad to the general location of the two living enemy using my Ground Commander's Pointer (GCP- 2B), a high intensity infrared (IR) beam. The ability to control the dismounted force with an IR beam proved very effective for a rapid movement to the enemy position. The squad located in the rear of the two northern Bradleys was the initial element on the ground. I was able to control the movement of the Infantry on the ground using the GCP-2B to designate direction and the laser range finder on the IBAS to determine distance. The squad leader on the ground received a distance and followed the IR beam for direction to the area of concern. With the placement of the dismounted element on the engagement area, the orientation of the Bradley's main guns adjusted to secure the outer perimeter of the objective. The northern most and eastern most Bradleys maintained their overwatch positions to provide fixing fires if necessary. The innermost Bradleys oriented their turrets to the rear of the perimeter to provide rear security. The M2A3 Bradley's CIV allowed for each vehicle to scan an additional sector to reinforce the security of the area. Reorienting the turrets of the Bradleys did not decrease the security of the perimeter because of the CIV. The Bradley's main guns were oriented away from Infantry as they advanced onto the objective preventing any possibility of fratricide. The CIVs could observe any movement into the engagement area to provide the Infantry early warning or to adjust their movement.

As the Infantry squads approached the berm, their fires were oriented to the east in accordance with the direct fire plan. The lead squad advanced in a wedge formation using the terrain to their advantage. As the squad approached the area designated by the GCP-2B, they were able to provide additional IR illumination onto the area by using the PEQ-2As mounted on their individual weapons. During the approach, the pointman of the squad heard two individuals talking in a covered location approximately 40 meters away. The Infantry moved quickly and silently into area of the voices and observed two men in a covered position. The limited visibility benefited the Infantry elements due to the use of the night vision devices and lasers. The enemy had yet to realize that Coalition forces were advancing onto their location. The



Figure 2

lead squad immediately engaged with small arms from approximately 30 meters and killed the enemy that survived the Bradley's fire. The squad found a hand grenade and an AK-47 on the bodies. Following this discovery, the Infantry squad in contact continued to clear each body in the area in order to categorize the bodies as wounded in action (WIA) or KIA. From the initial visual contact to the Infantry squad's

engagement, I counted eight bodies.

As the Infantry continued to advance through the objective, I dismounted to facilitate the link up between the three squads as well as to provide an accurate assessment of the engagement to my higher unit. We ensured security of the immediate area and established a KIA, WIA, and weapons collection point. Once the link up between the squads was completed, I expanded the dismounted perimeter and sent elements along the enemy ambush position to provide any additional battle damage assessment (BDA). In the area of the Infantry squad engagement, we counted nine enemy KIAs. These bodies were within a 15-meter radius of each other on the TRP. Additionally, we began to consolidate the assortment of enemy weapons. The infantry squad moving along the berm identified one additional KIA southwest of the TRP. I initially accounted for eight enemy personnel, however, our sweep of the area revealed 10 KIA. A sweep of the berm resulted in finding an assortment of RPG and machine gun positions (Figure 2).

With the area secured and an accurate report of the BDA (battle damage assessment) sent to higher, we began a secondary search for any other BDA. The fixing positions of the Bradleys prevented any possibility of escape, however we searched for indications of an enemy fleeing the area. We found no visible signs that indicated a survivor. No trails of blood leading away from the objective were visible, and each of the weapons systems was in close proximity of a KIA. The platoon engagement resulted in 10 enemy KIAs and the recovery of one RPG-18, three RPG-7 launchers, one RPK, one PK, five AK-47s, one Tariq 9 mm pistol, three RPG armor-piercing (AP) rounds, two RPG HE rounds, two hand grenades, and one set of Russian-made night vision goggles (NVGs) (Figure 3).

The engagement began with visual contact of unidentified personnel scattered along the berm in separate fighting positions. Our initial contact was with four men looking over the berm. I speculate that the enemy intended to ambush a Coalition force convoy consisting of thin-skinned vehicles. Normally, our task force conducts raids in search of high-value targets (HVTs) throughout our area of operations during hours of limited visibility.



These convoys include light-armored and thin-skinned vehicles. As the enemy heard the BFVs approach, they anticipated contact but were surprised at seeing only armored tracked vehicles. The enemy decided against launching an attack, but in their indecisiveness four individuals on the ambush line gave away their position. Once the enemy realized their position was compromised, they assessed that they were unmatched against the Coalition force's armored vehicles. Immediately the enemy began to rally together moving east in an effort to escape. The escape efforts were futile with the development of the cordon. Despite no available route for exfiltration, the enemy continued their efforts to evade capture. The result of the enemy actions was a direct fire assault onto their position.

This engagement resulted in direct fire contact. However, if the Bradleys did not observe enemy weapons, the suspicious activity of the men and their location warranted the need for further investigation. Such a scenario would require the same course of action on my part without the initiation of fire. The need to cordon the area in order to prevent escape, establish an engagement area, and assign direct fire sectors set the conditions to ensure the success of the mission. The small unit leader on the ground must decide the most opportune time to transition from an observing posture on the Bradleys to an offensive mindset. At this point the Infantry squads are the key element with the task of conducting a tactical movement to contact in order to clear the suspicious individuals. Once the Infantry initiates movement onto the objective area, the Bradleys' turret orientation and direct fire sectors change to prevent fratricide. Nonetheless, the CIV, IBAS, GCP-2B, PEQ-2A, PAQ-4, and NVGs play a dominant role in commanding and controlling as well as security.

The entirety of the above engagement emphasized some very key points in dealing with insurgent forces in Iraq. Each of these points I will describe in detail below.

### **Superiority of equipment**

It is no secret that the anti-Coalition forces in Iraq possess mainly outdated Russian equipment. The enemy's equipment is most effective at close range in hours of good visibility. The enemy attempts to use terrain to his advantage in maximizing the effect of his weapon



**Figure 3**

systems by establishing engagement areas with covered and concealed positions from 75 to 300 meters away from the kill zone. The enemy prefers to use IEDs or RPGs to initiate contact followed by a volley of machine gun fire to exploit any damaged or thin-skinned vehicles.

This engagement deviated from the normal enemy tactics by conducting operations in limited visibility with the use of NVGs. Coalition forces mostly assume that we possess the only night vision capabilities in Iraq. The discovery of the fully functioning Russian-made NVGs during this engagement proves otherwise. Although the NVGs we found were old, they were nonetheless effective.

In comparison, American forces possess an overwhelming advantage in good and limited visibility. The M2A3 Bradley is equipped with an IBAS sight that allows the gunner and Bradley Commander (BC) to scan with thermal optics. The thermal optics proved essential in initiating visual contact with the enemy. Additionally the M2A3 Bradley is equipped with the CIV. The CIV has an equally effective sighting system and gives the BC the option to view what the gunner sees or scan an additional sector. The crew now has the ability to scan twice as much terrain. In this instance, the gunner was able to secure the outer perimeter once the Infantry dismounted, while the CIV allowed the BC the ability to support the Infantry on the

ground in the engagement area.

Additionally, NVGs in combination with the PEQ-2A, PAQ-4, and the GCP- 2B provides the ability to provide highly accurate fires during limited visibility. This advantage provides the fighting force the opportunity to engage the enemy from greater distances during poor visibility. A secondary use of the IR beam from the laser systems allows BCs and leaders on the ground to direct fires and movements with less verbal communication. With the night vision laser systems, leaders can quickly and effectively direct movement on the battlefield. The IR beam equips the leader with the ability to initiate movement and adjust directions as easily during hours of limited visibility as using a finger and terrain during hours of good visibility. The beam eliminates the need for any questions or verbal communication. Ultimately, the beam reduces the leader's only transmission to "follow the light."

### **Maneuver**

Setting conditions for a successful engagement begins with maneuvering, movement, and positioning. Once visual contact is made, the element in contact must move to an attack-by-fire position that allows for a successful cordon of the area. Such positions should include good cover and concealment as well as good visibility in the assigned sector of fire. However, in this engagement we opted to establish cordon positions without cover and



concealment due to the overwhelming advantage of firepower we possessed. This cordon, although not symmetrical by any means, allowed for visibility on all avenues of egress. The final positions of each Bradley left the enemy vulnerable from every angle. The enemy was forced to decide to surrender or die. Understanding and utilizing the terrain is a key component to effective maneuvering.

### **Direct Fires**

Maneuvering and positioning directly correlate with the ability to assign effective direct fire sectors. The allocation of fires ranges from destruction of the enemy to the suppression of the enemy in a fixed location while additional elements maneuver to exploit. Toward the end of our engagement we relied on the suppressive fires of our eastern most Bradley to fix the final two enemy personnel in place while the Infantry squads maneuvered into a position to exploit. The positioning of each Bradley provided the desired endstate. Direct fire sectors onto the objective were controlled with the use of a TRP and a terrain feature. Each position included sectors that fixed the enemy with direct fires in order to prevent escape. Effective positioning results in capitalizing on the superiority of our direct fire assets to exploit the enemy's position. Direct fires easily destroy enemy personnel and equipment. Fixing fires damage and destroy enemy positions while preventing the possibility of the enemy escaping. Fixing the enemy in position also allows dismounted elements time to maneuver in a position to exploit the enemy.

Additionally, assigning and adhering to a strict direct fires plan mitigates the risk of fratricide. The lethality of the weapon systems in the United States arsenal creates an increased responsibility regarding direct fires. Leaders that fail to control fires of their assigned weapons run the risk of friendly casualties. The book answer to engagement area positioning establishes natural sectors of fire. However, the terrain dictates positioning forward of friendly lines. The small unit leader must decide and assign the most effective types of fires for each element. Designating terrain features as TRPs is a quick and simple way to orient fires. TRPs and sectors of fire must be understood from all elements of the unit in contact.

### **Overwhelming Fires**

Overwhelming fires is a subset of direct fires and infers to the need for increased fires onto the objective. My battalion commander adheres to a philosophy of high volumes of fire when engaging the enemy. This philosophy is in contradiction to most training events in the rear which emphasize engaging targets with limited rounds. The M16 qualification range allows one round per target. Bradley gunneries evaluate the rounds expended per engagement. Although round conservation is a valid consideration, a battlefield with limited engagements compels the fighting force to ensure the destruction of enemy forces once the opportunity presents itself. High volumes of suppressive fire directed towards the enemy's last known location are absolutely essential once contact is made to fix the enemy in position. Once the enemy is fixed, the element in contact has time for additional maneuvering as well

as the opportunity to destroy any covered or concealed positions. Limiting suppressive fires provides opportunity for the enemy to evade capture. Failing to destroy the enemy on any occasion allows him to fight another day as well as boast to other potential terrorists of his ability to elude the Coalition forces.

### **Tactical Patience**

A key component of this engagement revolved around tactical patience. Failing to identify weapon systems on possible enemy relegates the small unit to observe and not fire. The natural Infantry tendency is to "blast" into position as opposed to maneuver into position. Tactical patience demands for the establishment of an engagement area that sets the condition for a highly effective engagement. "Blasting" into position fails to provide the pause necessary to identify and cover all avenues of egress.

Additionally, Bradley equipped units must decide the most opportune time to transition the main effort from the mounted force to the Infantry squads. The objective is not clear until the Infantry has walked the ground and assessed the damage. In this situation a hostile weapon was identified and the Infantry squads cleared the objective after direct fires assaulted the engagement area. The awesome effect of the M242 25mm BFV automatic gun as well as the rhythmic fire of the M240C set the conditions of disabling the enemy so that the Infantry squads could easily clear. If a hostile weapon had not been identified, the situation still required the Infantry squads to clear the area in response to the suspicious behavior. The leader in contact must assess the prime opportunity for the transition. There is no correct answer; however the general rule of thumb we have adapted is to dismount ground forces once movement on the objective ceases.

Iraqi insurgents provide limited opportunities for direct fire engagements. The ability to react quickly and effectively allows Coalition forces increased opportunities to gain and maintain contact as well as provide time to maneuver into position. The uniqueness of the fight in Iraq forces small units to alter some tactics, techniques, and procedures we habitually train. The described engagement is seen in every area of responsibility in a variety of forms. The enemy composition and disposition in this instance included 10 men and an impressive arsenal of weapons. The enemy normally operates in two to three man teams with hidden IEDs on major avenues of approach. Such men make it a purpose to recruit others in their struggle against progress for the new Iraq. The lives of those continuing to engage in combat operations against Coalition forces must be eradicated if they continue to refuse to accept the changes in Iraq. A command emphasis on exploiting Coalition forces' superior equipment and overwhelming fires coupled with the ability to control maneuver, direct fires, and practice tactical patience lessens the enemy's resolve to continue their resistance against the progress of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

---

**First Lieutenant Timothy Meadors** is a 2001 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy. He served as the platoon leader in A Company, 2nd Battalion, 8th Infantry, 4th Infantry Division for the duration of the unit's deployment as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The unit recently redeployed to Fort Hood, Texas.

---



# TRAINING NOTES



## TTPs For the 60mm Mortar Section

STAFF SERGEANT JASON E. LEVY

In the first week of April 2003, Task Force Red Devil, comprised of the 1st Battalion, 508th Infantry (Airborne) and Delta Battery, 3rd Battalion, 319th Field Artillery, conducted two artillery/mortar raids outside of the northern Iraqi city of Irbil. These missions were against an Iraqi Republican Guard Battalion supported by armor and artillery.

The mission was to destroy forward Iraqi observation posts, dug-in Iraqi positions, and to neutralize Iraqi armor and artillery pieces. The 60mm mortar primary targets were personnel and light-skinned vehicles near the observation posts. The battalion 120mm mortar section and two 105mm howitzers were tasked to neutralize the enemy armor and artillery. The mounted rifle companies were tasked to provide route security, security of the firing elements at the firing points, quick reaction force (QRF) duties, and to emplace accurate fires onto the enemy using their vehicle-mounted 50-caliber machine guns and Mk-19 grenade launchers.

The 60mm mortars from Alpha Company, 1-508th Infantry, were tasked to provide immediate indirect fire support onto known and suspected targets. Upon reaching their planned mortar firing point, the section immediately dismounted their HMMWV (high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle) and conducted an emergency occupation. The section immediately received a call for fire from their forward observers. Within 60 seconds of occupation, the section was placing accurate high explosive (HE) and white phosphorus (WP) rounds onto and in the vicinity of the Iraqi observation posts.

While conducting the fire mission, the Mk-19 and 50-caliber machine gunners opened fire in order to suppress Iraqis in the trench line and on a ridgeline to their front. The gunner's well-aimed suppressive fire enabled the mortar section to continue their mission.

The Iraqis responded with poorly aimed direct and indirect fires. The 105mm howitzers and 120mm mortars set up and were firing onto the artillery and tank positions. The 105mm howitzers fired more than 50 rounds from their two cannons in support of the operation. The 60mm mortar sections emplaced traversing fire onto the Iraqi trench line and observation posts. The Iraqis in one observation post attempted to flee but were fixed with white phosphorus fires. As they attempted to flee again, white



phosphorus rounds impacted the vehicle and set it on fire. The section continued to fire a mix of high explosive and white phosphorus rounds into the objective area. The section fired more than 80 rounds in support of the mission. Upon receiving the order to displace and reorganize for the movement back to the battalion assembly area, the 105s, 120s and 60s quickly broke their systems down and moved out. The rifle companies continued to provide suppressive fire onto the objectives.

Upon reconsolidation of all elements, the task force moved back to the battalion assembly area. The total mission time for each raid was approximately 30 minutes.

The two raids were responsible for the neutralization of a Republican Guard Unit. Follow-on battle damage assessments reported that numerous fighting positions, equipment, and personnel were destroyed.

This raid was imperative because it validated the extensive and difficult training, leader development, standard operating procedures, and complete integration of light mortars in combat operations.

The focus of this article is to discuss the tactics, techniques, and procedures utilized by the 60mm mortar section in Bravo Company, 1-508th (ABN) during combat operations in Iraq, as well as to discuss tactics and techniques that will aid the light infantry company mortars in combat operations. This article will discuss training conducted prior to the deployment, SOP development, and lessons learned from combat operations.

Light mortar sections consist of two squads, each consisting of one mortar system and its three-man crew. In airborne, air assault, and light infantry rifle companies, the senior squad leader is the section leader. I feel this is completely inadequate for the 60mm mortar section. Recent detailed studies of an airborne infantry battalion in Afghanistan showed that the average approach load for a 60mm mortar section was in excess of 115 pounds. The average emergency approach load for the 60mm mortar section was in excess of 140 pounds. Soldiers were carrying over 90 percent of their body weight. A study at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) in 1995 concluded that the average approach march load should kept at less than 30 percent of a Soldier's body weight.

The simple solution to this problem would be to increase the amount of Soldiers in the 60mm mortar section. The distribution



of equipment and added mobility would greatly aid the section in conducting its combat mission. The battalion and company leadership in my unit was outstanding and extremely supportive of mortars. We were able to man each 60 section in battalion with nine Soldiers. This enabled each mortar team to have three Soldiers and an radio operator in addition to the section sergeant and squad leader. Some sections opted to carry an additional radio in order to monitor both company command and company fires nets. This added manpower enabled the sections to carry more ammo, move faster tactically, and conduct missions more efficiently. Mortar sections can cross train the company armorer, NBC NCO, and any other members of the headquarters platoon to fill the additional three slots. While I do not foresee the Department of the Army increasing our modified table of organization and equipment (MTOE), I highly encourage unit commanders to increase the number of Soldiers in their mortar sections. The added manpower will only increase the lethality of your mortars.

My unit conducted numerous live fires, training missions, and deployments prior to our airborne assault into Northern Iraq. The one common factor to all of our training was realism. The chain of command stressed the integration of light mortars and held Soldiers and leaders accountable for their employment. Tough, realistic, demanding training was the norm, not the exception. Our unit conducted semiannual rigorous 72-96 hour external evaluations of all mortar sections in our battalion. The evaluations focused on the specific tasks for a 60mm mortar section such as fire direct lay, handheld trigger fires, emergency missions while moving (hip shots), and long dismounted movements over tough terrain in all weather conditions. Each section was tested on fire direction procedures by the 81mm mortar platoon. The test consisted of a plotting board and computer exam. All results were forwarded to the battalion commander for review. My after actions review (AAR) comment is that each brigade should implement and execute a tough, demanding external evaluation program for their 60mm mortar sections. Fire direction certification training should be conducted in conjunction with this training.



Courtesy photo

*Specialist Cody Burke of the 1st Battalion, 508th Infantry (Airborne) positions his section's 60mm mortar system during a mission in Iraq.*

Unit leaders should be involved with their mortar men to ensure that they are proficient in their duties. Involve yourself with the fire direction center (FDC) certification of your sergeants. Send your Soldiers to the Infantry Mortar Leaders Course. It is a great school that will help to increase the combat effectiveness of your unit. Test your IIC NCOs on FDC procedures. Ensure that they know their duties.

The increased involvement of unit leader's in the mortar section's certification will help to aid the section's complete integration into company operations.

I cannot stress enough the importance of knowing the plotting board for manual computations of firing data. On Day 2 of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), both of my computers malfunctioned. For the rest of OIF, my squad leader and I used plotting boards as our primary method for calculations. The 81mm mortar platoon loaned us one computer, but it was used only as a backup for our plotting boards. Units need to ensure that their Soldiers are proficient in the use of the plotting board by conducting classes during Sergeants Time and opportunity training.

Expect equipment to break. Do not wait for a catastrophe prior to learning the plotting board. Always keep a plotting board set up with a modified observed firing chart. Use it as a battle-tracking tool for

patrols and company operations.

In Iraq, it was often difficult for our section to receive maps. I was able to transfer the map data directly onto my plotting board hence no map was necessary. All mortar men should be trained on fire direction procedures. Each Soldier must know how to compute the firing data for a grid, shift, polar, and registration call for fire. These skills must be tested often to ensure that the Soldiers can compute all of them on the plotting board and M23 Mortar Ballistic Computer. Cross training of all members should be a priority in training. In combat operations, it is realistic that one of more of the section members will become casualties. Train for this reality and take the steps to mitigate the loss of one or more Soldiers by ensuring all Soldiers can do all jobs in the section.

The mortar section's best contribution to combat success is its immediate responsiveness to the company commander's orders, the speed in which it can be brought into action, and the effectiveness and accuracy of its multi-option fuze-equipped round.

Tough and demanding live-fire training is the only way to accomplish this. Live-fire training should be as realistic as possible. Do not allow the mortar section to fire from some distant firing point while the company conducts live fires. Instead conduct long-range movements with all





Courtesy photo

***Sergeant Mannie Holmes, a squad leader with B Company, 1st Battalion, 508th Infantry, prepares for a firing mission.***

equipment to the mortar firing point so Soldiers can feel the effects of fatigue, sleep loss, and loss of energy. During company live fires, we would conduct all foot movements with our company and co-locate with the support-by-fire position. This allowed us to practice emergency occupations, crew drills, and forward observer coordination's on close targets. Once mortar fires are shifted off of the objective, prepare to displace. Once the company clears the objective, coordinate with the commander to move onto the objective in order to prepare for a counterattack. Conduct fire missions around the objective while the company is reconsolidating and reorganizing. Vary the engagement method during the training iteration. For one iteration use direct lay fires. For the next, use the handheld method. Make the live fire challenging for the mortar section. Integrate the use of rifle platoons transporting ammunition to the new firing point. Test all of the company's systems during the reorganization. One of the critical steps should be the cross loading of ammunition. Use this ammunition for your counterattack missions. It will aid the company in tracking and maintaining ammunition. Train hard and give your Soldiers tough, realistic goals to strive for. This type of training will help the mortar section to develop and control specific rates of fire by planning additional ammunition for future missions.

The mortar section must be able conduct operations at night and in all weather conditions in order to know the true measure of the section. Any 60mm section can have a great live fire on a

sunny day. Train to accomplish a great live fire after a 12-mile foot march, in the rain with a 100-pound rucksack on your back. A mortar section that can ruckmarch all night after an airborne assault, and be prepared to deliver close, accurate, timely fires is the goal for training. Physical fitness is the cornerstone of a combat ready Soldier. The mortar section must exert maximum effort during physical training.

A strong road marching plan with loads in excess of eighty pounds should be instituted. Mortarmen must become conditioned to the heavy loads they will be carrying in combat operations. Unit commanders must give specific guidance and training plans for foot marching. This hard training will condition the unit to the rigors of combat loads. Conduct forced marches with loads in excess of 80 pounds. Mortar men must have strong upper bodies in order to handle the extreme loads that come with the duty position. Physically fit Soldiers perform better and are proven to adjust to stress more adequately. Hard physical training will payoff in combat operations. I highly doubt that my section would have been successful on our mission on the drop zone in Iraq if they were not fit. The mud, heavy loads, and environmental factors were handled well due to the fact my Soldiers were all in top condition.

The 60mm mortar section can quickly fire large amounts of ammunition. The M224 can fire 120 rounds in four minutes, and a three-man crew can have 15 to 20 rounds in the air before the first round impacts. Only a highly trained crew can achieve this impressive rate of fire. It also is dependent on the amount of ammunition carried by the company.

In order for a company mortar section to be successful it must have an easily understood SOP for mortar ammunition in the company. Have the company carry dummy mortar rounds in all training and movements.

This enables the rifle platoons to get used to carrying mortar ammunition. It also trains the platoon sergeants to develop detailed load plans for his platoon. Hold platoon sergeants accountable for the mortar ammunition. It is amazing how often ammunition will come up missing. An easy technique for mortar round drop off is as follows. Teach the company on distinguishing the difference between number one and two gun as they are in a mortar firing position. The orientation of the mortar tubes in an assembly area always has number two gun on the left in the direction of fire. As our Soldiers would pass through the company assembly point, the members of 1st and 3rd Platoons would drop their ammunition at number one gun (odd numbered gun), and the members of 2nd Platoon and Headquarters would drop their ammunition at the number two gun. It is a simple technique that is easily understood. Practice the pick up and drop off of mortar ammunition during missions.

Our SOP was for each mortar section member to carry an empty kit bag or A bag at the bottom of his Alice pack. Each rifle platoon fire team identified one Soldier who followed this SOP. These bags came to our aid when the emergency movement of ammunition was required. These bags can also be utilized for consolidation of a casualty's equipment for movement to the rear. Each kit bag or A bag has the ability to carry approximately 13-15 rounds.

Each rifle platoon should designate a mortar ammunition resupply team similar to an aid and litter team. This designated team is responsible for rapidly resupplying the mortar section



during operations. The designated team must know the location of the mortar section during all operations.

Most operations and patrols in Iraq by my section were conducted by vehicle. Ammunition must be cross-loaded among all the vehicles in the company. I kept two cases of HE and two cases of illumination rounds on my designated mortar vehicle. Remember that you cannot transport white phosphorus and HE together on the same truck.

Keep a detailed log by bumper number of how and where your mortar ammunition is cross-loaded on the other vehicles. Let's say that the mortar section is in the middle of an engagement and requires the rapid resupply of ammunition at the firing point. At night, all green metal ammunition cans look the same. You can lose valuable time trying to locate the desired ammo. An easy technique is to paint the top lid of your ammunition cases a different color. You can paint the top lid of your HE cases red, the white phosphorus lids white, and the illumination case lids blue. Instead of communicating that you need three cases of HE and two cases of WP, you can ease confusion by calling forward the delivery of three red boxes and two white boxes. This is an easy technique that can be rapidly implemented and executed.

Clearance of fire drills must be practiced during training. In a perfect world, the company commander is the approving authority for company level mortar fires. In the complex atmosphere of Iraq where you have numerous units and operations ongoing, the clearance authority is usually at brigade or higher levels of command. Practice the relaying of clearance of fires with your higher unit. It enables higher command to develop a quick reaction drill and SOP for the timely clearance of fires.

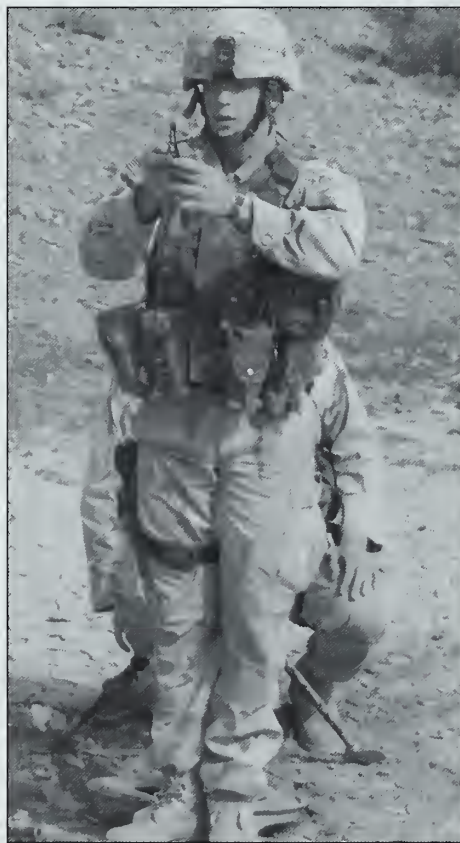
A requirement was imposed by my unit that all illumination fire requests had to be accompanied by the fail point impact grid in case the round did not properly function. This was done in order to project possible collateral damage. This became an established SOP in the clearance of fires of process. Many leaders are under the false assumption that overhead mortar fires are prohibited. Army Regulation 385-63 states, "overhead mortar or artillery fires are prohibited in training."

This restriction is only for training. Since we train how we fight, there are going

to be some that think that the overhead fires limitation is the way we will fight. Overhead fires are allowed in combat operations. The nature of company operations and tactical employment of mortars often produces this effect in combat. My section fired overhead numerous times due to limited firing positions while engaged. Leaders must understand that overhead fires are going to occur and not let the training restrictions influence their planning options when employing indirect fire support.

Foster and develop a strong relationship between the mortar section and the forward observers.

Upon receipt of a company warning order or patrol, insure that the company commander gives the mortar section a clear task and purpose for fires. This will aid the mortar section and forward observers to develop a company fires plan based on the commander's guidance and intent. Detailed planning between the commander and mortar section must occur in order to maximize the use of indirect fires. The mortar section sergeant is the main advisor



Specialist Jerry T. Combes  
*An 82nd Airborne Division Soldier prepares for a mission during operations in Afghanistan.*

to the commander and fire support team (FIST) chief on the tactical employment of the section.

He recommends employment methods and positions the section to best support the scheme of maneuver. During long deployments, complacency is bound to occur. This trend is to not conduct hands on crew drill. Success in battle depends on the ability of Soldiers and units to perform those tasks required in battle to defeat the enemy.

All training must maintain proficiency in individual and collective tasks within a band of excellence. This training must be realistic to ensure that the tasks mastered in training are performed well in battle. As a leader, ensure that the mortar section maintains readiness by conducting and executing crew drills to standard.

By month four in Iraq, our missions and tasks became very tedious and boring. I instituted a strong training program of crew and battle drills in order to maintain proficiency. We would supplement our crew drill with cross training of the platoons in the company. We attempted to train each Soldier on the fundamentals of handheld firing, direct lay firing, loading and firing a mortar, and how to set the charges on ammunition.

Each Soldier in the company should know how to engage targets with a handheld mortar. In wartime, it is very possible for the mortar team to sustain casualties. Cross training the rifle platoons in handheld and direct lay firing methods ensures that the unit will have the ability to engage targets if the mortar section loses multiple Soldiers. Train Soldiers at squad level. Any size larger and the focus of the target audience is lost.

Train mortar men daily on their duties and responsibilities. Teach them all the skills they need in order to survive and succeed on the battlefield. There will be a day when junior Soldiers are going to have to step up and perform the duties of squad leader and section sergeant.

There is no excuse for poor leadership. The section and the commander must develop a positive tactical and technical relationship for employment of indirect fire support.

---

**Staff Sergeant Jason E. Levy** is currently serving on Task Force 2 at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, Louisiana.

---



# Managing the Range Environment for Infantry Training

JASON R. APPLGATE

Soldiers training on Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia, may not realize it, but over the past two years, installation land managers have been capitalizing on its resident Integrated Training Area Management (ITAM) program to maintain sustainable range operations in support of infantry training. Specifically, through the Land Condition Trend Analysis (LCTA) program, a series of environmental assessment procedures have been developed to understand the relationship between environmental impacts from live-fire infantry training, the consequences of those impacts to range operations, and the long-term sustainability of natural conditions on specialized training facilities used for Infantry training.

The latest assessment conducted by the installation LCTA program occurred on Range 26; an Infantry Squad Battle Course (ISBC). The ISBC is a specialized training facility that is more than 90-percent forested and spans approximately 300 acres (121.5 ha). The facility includes a series of objectives (designated Alpha – Echo), which Infantry units assault as part of their training experience. Though no two objectives are identical, they typically consist of either stationary or mobile armored targets, and/or stationary or mobile infantry targets (Figure 1). Pine and hardwood forests surround all of the objectives on the ISBC.

**Figure 1 - Mobile armored target**



Situated among the various objectives are large trees that were intentionally left standing following the development of the facility. The trees offer tactical cover and concealment to Soldiers while they assault the objectives as well as to provide for a more realistic training experience (Figure 2).

Additional support for units training on the ISBC is offered through designated assembly areas, after action review sites, and a helicopter-landing zone. The facility as a whole offers a training scenario reflecting real-world conditions in a woodland setting.



**Figure 2 - Trees located among the objectives offering tactical cover and concealment**

In the course of managing the facility, range and land managers observed that munitions fired on the range would travel beyond and through the targetry dispersing into the surrounding forests. It was the impacts of those munitions on the forest and the subsequent impacts to range operations that were the focus of the assessment. While a comprehensive survey of forest conditions were part of this assessment, the most important features to range sustainability and operations were:

- Tree health and mortality,
- Forest debris accumulation, and
- Horizontal concealment.

Determining the extent of tree health and current mortality rates provides information on how likely an area is to be sustained by forest cover for training realism, while information on debris accumulation is desired due to its effect on the severity of range fires; a frequent and common occurrence. Horizontal concealment is part of the doctrinal requirement that must be met for infantry training.

LCTA used in-house techniques and methods from the United States Forest Service to conduct the assessment. Data on damage and mortality was collected on the trees scattered among the objectives, while data on mortality, downed debris, and concealment were collected on the forests behind the objectives. The latter was collected along a gradient; from the forest edge (closest to the objectives), to forest interior (approximately 50 meters away), and stopping at the forest deep interior (approximately 75-100 meters from the objectives). This





**Figure 4 - Open wounds created by repeat munitions fire on the ISBC**

comparison allows for trend analysis along the same gradient munitions travel and disperse.

LCTA discovered that 29 percent of the trees scattered among the objectives were already dead with between 25-39 percent likely to die within the next 10 years based on tree crown health. An even higher estimate may be possible given the high incidence of munitions damage to their stems further increasing stress and disease susceptibility (Figure 4). Munitions damage is the likely reason for tree condition given that 77 percent of the trees had observable bullet wounds.

We also learned that 33 percent of the trees along the woodline adjacent to the objectives were dead but still standing; three fold what land managers consider acceptable levels of mortality. The expected rates of mortality may be upwards of 27 percent depending on what distance from the objectives is of interest.

The presence of standing dead trees among the objectives and at the forest edge are directly hazardous to units training since they could conceivably fall during a



**Figure 5 - Coarse woody debris in the woods adjacent to the ISBC**



**Figure 6 - LCTA plots in an area frequented by forest fires**

training exercise and are also indirectly hazardous because once they fall they accumulate into debris piles. Forest fires occur regularly on Range 26, either from lightning strikes, prescribed burning by land managers, and sometimes even from units firing tracer rounds. If training activities increase, debris accumulation then they subsequently may increase the intensity and severity of future forest fires. Since units must cease their training exercises if a fire breaks, managing for debris may assist in increasing range availability. Approximately 23 tons per acre of debris were found along the woodline; three times more than what land managers consider acceptable conditions (Figure 5).

Understory vegetation is a principal component of horizontal concealment and

was found to be highest at the forest edge (58 percent) steadily decreasing into the forest deep interior (44 percent). This pattern is beneficial to training requirements because units have the concealment they need prior to assaulting the objectives. Concealment was also found to be affected by past range fires, indicating the importance of using fire to manage vegetation on a range facility (Figures 6).

Too little concealment detracts from the training experience; too much and it can impede units traversing the forests to assault the objectives.

The assessment conducted by LCTA has provided valuable insights on the interaction between the environment and infantry training that can be applied to sustaining this range. Cover and concealment around the objectives are anticipated to decrease in the coming years due training activities. Range managers now have that knowledge to be proactive and develop alternative means of cover and concealment to support infantry training before the need for them arises. Additionally, range managers can incorporate forest debris accumulation and horizontal concealment requirements into the sustainable management of the facility.

---

**Jason R. Applegate** is the coordinator for Fort A.P. Hill's Land Condition Trend Analysis program, which is employed by Engineering and Environment, Inc. He has a master's degree in forest management from the University of Montana.

---



# TACTICAL VIGNETTE

## Ambush at Qafus Tangay

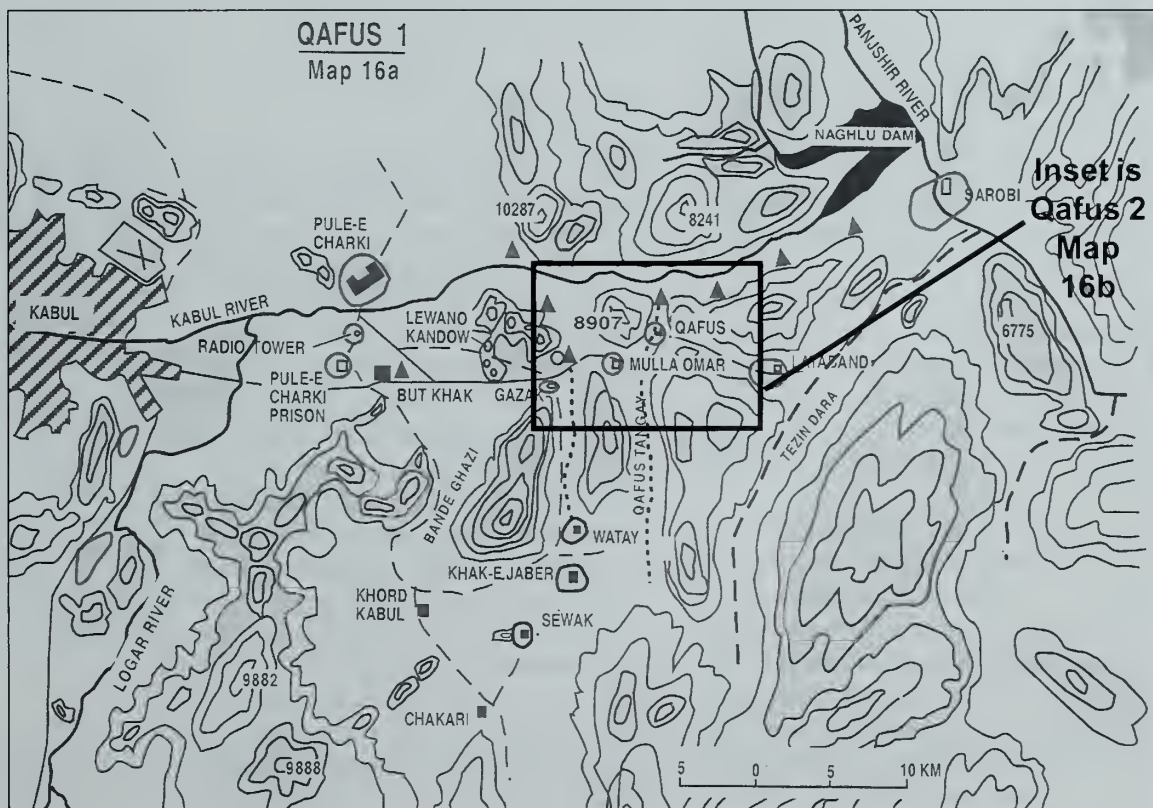
**Editor's Note:** This vignette was adapted from *The Other Side of the Mountain: Mujahideen Tactics in the Soviet-Afghan War*, which was written by Ali Ahmad Jalali and Lester Grau. The vignette was submitted by Major Sher Aqa Kochay, who was a graduate of the Afghan Military Academy in Kabul. He also received training in commando tactics in the Soviet Union. Kochay served as the 37th Commando Brigade and participated in Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) actions against the Mujahideen in Panjsher Valley. He defected, with a large amount of weapons, to the Mujahideen in 1982 and became a NIFA commander in Kabul. He organized a new Mujahideen base in the Khord Kabul area some 20 kilometers south of the Afghan capital.

### VIGNETTE

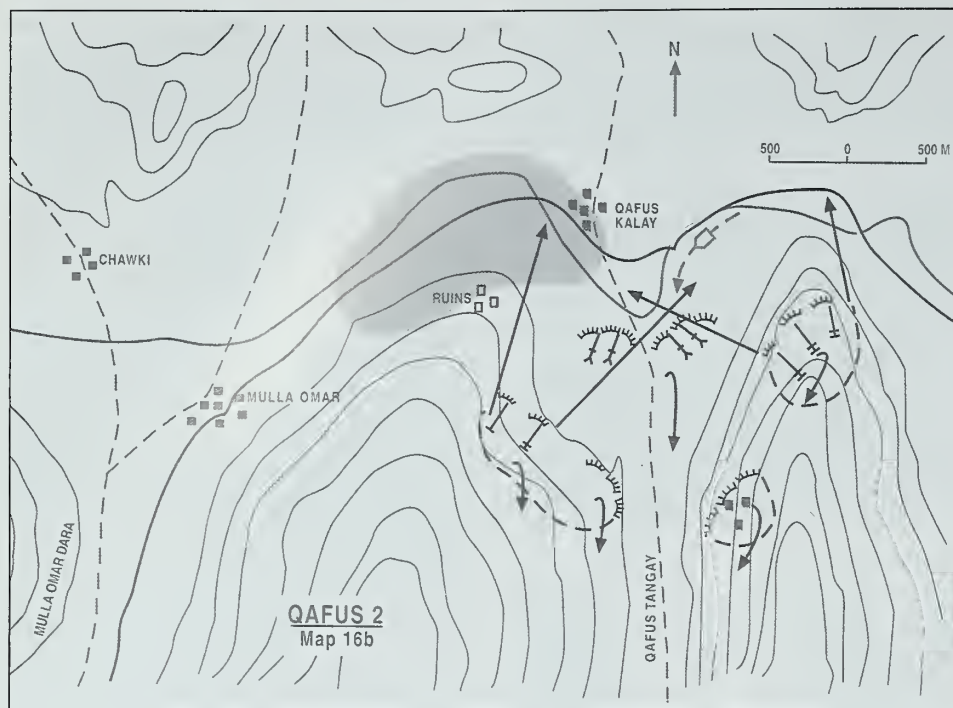
On August 13, 1985, my 40-man Mujahideen force moved from its base at Sewak (20 kilometers southeast of Kabul) to establish an ambush at the Qafus Tangay (some 25 kilometers east of Kabul). The area was protected by a Sarandoy (Internal Ministry Forces) regiment. This area was previously protected by tribal militia, but exactly one year prior, the local tribal militia of Hasan Khan Karokhel defected to the Mujahideen. Hence, the regiment deployed east of Kabul between Gazak and Sarobi to protect the power lines supplying electricity from Naghlu and Sarobi hydroelectric dams to Kabul. The regiment's headquarters was at Sur Kandow and its forces were deployed along the Butkhak-Sarobi road (southern east-west road on map) in security posts. (Map 16a - Qafus 1).

Each day, the regiment sent truck convoys with supplies from headquarters to the battalions. In turn, battalions sent trucks to make deliveries to all their highway outposts. About two kilometers from the DRA Mulla Omar base, the road cuts across the mouth of a narrow valley called Qafus Tangay. Qafus Tangay begins at the Rhak-e Jabar pass in the south and stretches north to the Gazak-Sarobi road. The valley offered a concealed approach from the Mujahideen bases in Khord Kabul in the south. The road at the mouth of the valley passes through difficult terrain forcing the traffic to move very slowly. This was a favorable point for an ambush.

I moved my detachment at night reaching the ambush site early in the morning of August 13. My group was armed with four RPG-7 anti-tank grenade launchers, several light machine guns and Kalashnikov automatic rifles. I grouped my men into three teams. I positioned a 10-man party with the four RPG-7s at the bottom of the valley near the road. I positioned two 15-man teams on each of the ridges on the two sides of the valley that dominated the road to the north. Both of the flank groups had PK machine guns. (Map 16b - Qafus 2)







The plan was to wait until the enemy's supply vehicles arrived at the difficult stretch of road directly facing the Qafus Tangay Valley. I planned to assign targets to the RPGs as the trucks moved into the kill zone (for example number one, fire at the lead truck). I hoped to engage four trucks simultaneously, maximizing surprise and fire power. The teams on the ridges were to cover the valley with interlocking fields of fire and to support the withdrawal of the RPG teams while repelling any enemy infantry. They would also seize prisoners and carry off captured weapons and supplies once they had destroyed the enemy convoy.

Finally, the group heard a vehicle approaching from the east. Soon an enemy jeep appeared around a bend in the road. As the jeep slowly moved over the rocky road to the ambush site, a machine gunner on the ridge suddenly opened fire at the vehicle.

I was extremely upset because the ambush had been compromised and ordered one RPG-7 gunner to kill the jeep before it escaped. A few seconds later, the vehicle was in flames and the wounded driver was out of the jeep. He was the sole occupant of the vehicle. He was returning from the battalion headquarters at Lataband where he had driven the regimental political

officer. We gave him first aid and released him. He was a conscript soldier from the Panjsher Valley who had recently been press-ganged into the military.

The Sarandoy sent out patrols from the nearby Spina Tana and Nu'manak outposts. Because it was too risky to remain at the ambush site we withdrew through the Qafus Tangay Valley to our base.

## DISCUSSION

Although the convoy lost one vehicle when the ambush was sprung, the unit was lucky that the machine gunner had fired and initiated the ambush prematurely. Had the ambush gone as it had been planned, the losses in men and materiel would have been significantly greater. The weaknesses inherent in the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan forces' planning and conduct of the road movement highlight the vulnerability of such operations. Given the current operating environment in Iraq and Afghanistan — where ambushes continue to be a favored tactic of insurgents — we do well to learn from the mistakes of Soviet and DRA forces.

Due to a perceived low threat level, the DRA unit ran convoys along the same routes — setting a pattern easily learned by the Mujahideen — and provided no

point, flank, or rear security that could detect and react to ambushes. Likewise, no provisions such as artillery fires plotted along the route or aerial gunship overwatch had been made for immediate reactions to enemy acts. The morale impact of all this on the DRA soldiers unlucky enough to pull convoy duty can only have been severe: they were sent out unprotected and on their own, apparently on the off-chance hope that nothing would happen to the convoy.

Our Army's experience in Vietnam, in Afghanistan, and in Iraq has yielded valuable experience which we have used to modify the way we move, resupply, communicate, and anticipate and react to enemy actions. But vehicles moving along a road will always carry with them a certain level of vulnerability, and we are sparing no effort to reduce that vulnerability to the lowest possible level. Each measure we take — dispersion; overwatch; security moving before, beside, and behind the convoy; preplanned fires; control of population movements along the route; varying the times and rates of movements; and extensive HUMINT operations within the area of interest — will progressively reduce the risk.

As we further infuse the tenets of Warrior Ethos into the Army, and as indigenous populations further realize that they are dealing with Soldiers willing and eager to kill their attackers, we will see fewer successful ambushes against our forces. Even now, we are seeing that tactics the enemy formerly successfully employed are no longer as successful; he is being forced to become ever more innovative and resourceful at a time when he is losing the initiative and his resources are rapidly diminishing. The enemy we faced in World War II, in Korea, and in Vietnam was a far more skilled one than today's adversaries, and the enemy's mounting casualties — far in excess of our own — are proof of the adaptability and aggressiveness of our Soldiers and their leaders.





# Subscriptions to *Infantry Magazine*

Personal subscriptions to *Infantry Magazine* are available. One-year subscriptions (6 issues) cost \$15, and two-year subscriptions (12 issues) are \$28. Foreign (non-APO) subscribers must add postage fee of \$15 for one-year and \$30 for two-year subscriptions. Payments must be in U.S. currency, by international money order or by a check or draft drawn from a U.S. bank. Checks, money orders or drafts should be made payable to INFANTRY.

To begin a subscription, fill out the form below and return with payment to:

**INFANTRY Magazine**  
**P.O. Box 52005**  
**Fort Benning, GA 31995-2005**

You can complete a completed subscription request form via e-mail; however, you will still need to drop a check in the mail since we cannot process credit or debit card transactions. (On-line form is available on our website at [www.infantry.army.mil/magazine](http://www.infantry.army.mil/magazine).)

**Renewing your subscriptions** – If you are not sure if your subscription is up for renewal, please send us an e-mail or call our office. Renewal notices are usually sent through the mail notifying you when the subscription is almost up. NOW, we can also send out renewal and other update information out electronically through e-mail. Please include an e-mail address on your subscription form for this purpose.

**Change of address** – If you recently moved or deployed and would like your subscription sent to a different address, please call or e-mail us with your updated information. The form below can also be used for this purpose.



**NOTE REGARDING UNIT SUBSCRIPTIONS:** Due to increased mailing costs and serious reductions in mailing funds, we may have to limit our no-cost unit distribution list. If this happens, free copies will only be distributed to active duty infantry units and Reserve, National Guard, and active duty infantry units serving as part of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. Once additional mailing funds become available, other units and staff agencies may be put back on the mailing list. However, in the meantime paid subscriptions will still be available, and the magazine will continue to be available online at [www.infantry.army.mil/magazine](http://www.infantry.army.mil/magazine). If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us.

For more information, call (706) 545-2350/6951 or DSN 835-2350/6951 or send an e-mail to [Inf.MagazineDep@benning.army.mil](mailto:Inf.MagazineDep@benning.army.mil).



# Infantry

Send form and payment to: INFANTRY Magazine, P.O. Box 52005 Fort Benning, GA 31995-2005		
RANK	NAME	
UNIT OR STREET ADDRESS		
APO OR CITY	STATE OR COUNTRY	ZIP
YOUR PERMANENT ADDRESS (OPTIONAL)		
STREET ADDRESS		
CITY	STATE OR COUNTRY	ZIP
E-MAIL ADDRESS: (TO RECEIVE UPDATES AND RENEWAL INFORMATION)		
PAYMENTS MUST BE IN U.S. CURRENCY, INTERNATIONAL MONEY ORDER, OR BY CHECK OR DRAFT DRAWN FROM A U.S. BANK WITH THE BANK'S NINE-DIGIT ROUTING NUMBER PRINTED ON THE CHECK.		

- ☐ \$28.00 (12 ISSUES)  
☐ \$15.00 ( 6 ISSUES)

FOREIGN (NON-APO) SUBSCRIBERS  
 ADD POSTAGE FEE OF \$15.00 FOR 6  
 ISSUES OR \$30.00 FOR 12 ISSUES

**TOTAL DUE:**

PLEASE CHECK BOXES THAT APPLY:

- ☐ NEW  
☐ RENEWAL  
☐ CHANGE OF ADDRESS



# BOOK REVIEWS



**Boyd: The Fighter Pilot Who Changed the Art of War.** By Robert Coram. Little, Brown and Company, New York, 2002. 485 pages. \$27.95. Reviewed by Major Dennis P. Chapman.

Robert Coram has brought us a vivid description of a remarkable man who, though operating largely unknown to the public, made a tremendous contribution to the national security of the United States during a period of service spanning most of the Cold War. That man was U.S. Air Force Colonel John Boyd, and an extraordinary man he was. Possessed of astonishing imagination and creative power, Boyd was the driving force behind at least four different far-ranging intellectual efforts, each of which had a direct and profound impact on the way America fights. He developed the first comprehensive doctrinal manual for air-to-air combat in U.S. Air Force history; he developed a revolutionary concept – the Energy-Maneuverability (E-M) Theory. This theory, which was for designing and evaluating combat aircraft, was based upon how fast an aircraft can *gain* or *lose* energy in order to achieve a position of advantage against another pilot. He was also the driving force behind development of the F16 fighter, working relentlessly to ensure that the aircraft would enter production as the trim, agile killing machine he envisioned and not as a ponderous flying brick encumbered by excessive, ineffective technological gadgetry. Boyd's greatest achievement and his most far-reaching contribution, however, wasn't in the air; it was in his development of a time-based theory of war focused on ground combat. The heart of this effort was his four-step "Observe-Orient-Decide-Act" decision-making model – the now-famous "OODA Loop." In essence, Boyd argued that to be successful in combat, a commander must "get inside" his adversary's decision loop. This involves not only making decisions faster than the enemy, but also disrupting

the enemy's decision loop, forcing him to make decisions based upon outdated, inaccurate, or irrelevant information so that he becomes disoriented, demoralized, and ultimately unable to act.

The chief weakness of the book is Coram's lack of objectivity about Boyd's significant personal flaws and about his relationship with the Air Force. Boyd was a volatile and mercurial man who could be petulant, self-absorbed, and arrogant. He could be abrasive – even abusive – and had a flair for humiliating those he deemed his enemies. Coram trots out examples of the foibles of the general officers Boyd so disdained as evidence of their venality and incompetence, but he easily forgives equally egregious behavior by Boyd himself, as if to imply that in Boyd's case such faults were indicative of his passion, integrity, and depth of commitment and therefore acceptable. Finally, Coram depicts the Air Force as hell-bent on stifling Boyd and suppressing his ideas. The reality, however, seems more ambiguous. Only a small percentage of officers ever reach the rank of full colonel, and only a few of those receive commands. Yet Boyd achieved both, possibly due to the quiet support and glowing endorsements on his officer evaluation reports (OERs) by several general officers during his career. Furthermore, as controversial as he was, Boyd was able to bring much of his work to fruition while still on active duty, often using Air Force resources. So, while the Air Force bitterly opposed Boyd at many junctures on the one hand, it also advanced, nurtured, and protected him on the other, facilitating his work and enabling him to realize his great potential.

All in all, I highly recommend this book. A lively and pleasant read, it is also quite informative and presents the essence of Boyd's ideas in a straightforward, easily understood manner, making the book a rewarding effort well worth the modest investment of time and money that it requires.

**All the Way to Berlin. A Paratrooper at War in Europe.** By James Magellas. Ballentine Books, New York, 2003. 309 pages. \$24.95. Reviewed by Christopher Timmers.

When offered the opportunity to review this book, I simply could not refuse. As a former rifle platoon leader in B Company, 1st Battalion, 325th Infantry, I knew I would have a certain bond with James Magellas that would be difficult to explain to those who had never served in an airborne unit or commanded young Soldiers. Historically, the 325th Infantry was a glider regiment in the 82nd Airborne Division and made many of the same assaults that a young First Lieutenant Magellas did as a member of H Company, 504th Parachute Infantry. My "battles" were in the early '70s, a good 30 years after Magellas had earned a number of valor awards, including the Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, Bronze Star, and Purple Heart. By the time I had joined the 325th, the regiment had been transformed from a glider unit to a parachute one. Both First Lieutenant Magellas and First Lieutenant Timmers had one thing in common: 48 jumps. None of mine had been in combat, but I think I was close enough to my men to feel an immediate empathy to a former platoon leader who had made such jumps.

Magellas's prose is smooth and moves quickly. It is the best in historical writing in that it makes actual events more interesting than fiction could ever be. Magellas fought in virtually every type of infantry unit action imaginable: from amphibious landings (Anzio) to parachute assaults (Market Garden), to sustained ground combat action (Italy, Belgium, Holland, Germany). The scope of his narrative takes the reader from North Africa to Italy to England, then to Holland, then France, and, eventually, into the heart of the Nazi empire, Germany. We all know of the heroics of the 82nd Airborne, but



Magellas lets us in on the price these victories demanded. Casualties were constant and high. After the amphibious assault at Anzio, he tells us that "1LT Roy Hanna who had landed at Anzio as the leader of the machine gun platoon, was sent down to command I Company *after it had lost all its officers.*" War is hell, Magellas agrees, but adds later, "War is the most brutal form of human endeavor, and those who choose to view it as a glorious national venture dishonor the memory of those young men who suffered and died in combat."

Magellas comes down hard on the higher ups, particularly in the intelligence community. British and American commands disregarded intelligence reports in 1944 from the Dutch underground as to the presence of two SS Panzer divisions in the vicinity of Arnhem. By ignoring these warnings, Allied commanders ensured that Operation Market Garden would be an unmitigated disaster, particularly for the British 1st Parachute Division. Another intelligence failure was to occur just a few months later when the Germans launched a massive strike in the Ardennes forest against a thinly manned front line of four U.S. infantry divisions. Two of these (the 99th and 106th) were green, largely untested units. The German attack, launched on December 16, 1944, resulted in the complete rout of these American units and the taking of more than 8,000 U.S. prisoners. But perhaps Magellas's most scathing expose of higher ups completely out of touch comes late in the book (p 251). His platoon is encamped on the Rhine River when he receives word that an assistant division commander is about to visit his unit's positions. "Sir, I am Lieutenant Magellas. Welcome to H Company." Magellas was filthy and unshaven and wore no insignia of rank, a practice common to front line officers. The newly minted brigadier asks, "Are you an officer?" And again, "When was the last time you shaved?" The brigadier general adds: "I expect officers to set a good example for the enlisted men." Magellas comments: "To me that was more than an offhand expression. I took it as a personal insult." As well he should have.

The Epilogue to this work is just as important as the narrative of battle.

Magellas gives us a detailed account of what many of these young paratroopers ended up doing. Some became police officers, others career military men, still others executives in industry or leaders in academia. In other words, these young men who took to jumping out of airplanes in the 1940's and fighting their country's biggest war ever, returned to being what they really were all along: loyal U.S. citizens who loved their country and contributed to its growth and prosperity.

This story of a heroic young man and his comrades needed to be written and deserves to be read.

---

***Operatives, Spies, and Saboteurs: The Unknown History of the Men and Women of World War II's OSS.* By Patrick K. O'Donnell. Free Press, 2004. 336 Pages. Price unavailable.** Reviewed by Second Lieutenant James A. Capobianco.

Claiming to be the first agent level history of the famed Office of Strategic Services, *Operatives, Spies, and Saboteurs* is created from interviews with more than 300 surviving OSS agents and supporting declassified documents at the National Archives. The book takes the reader on a journey from the bureaucratic inception of the OSS, through agent training and OSS operations in various countries and campaigns of the War. All descriptions and narratives are exclusively from the operator's perspective.

As the predecessor to the present day Central Intelligence Agency, the Office of Strategic Services pioneered intelligence gathering techniques, tactics, and safeguards which are reportedly still in use today. The brain child of William "Wild Bill" Donovan, the OSS emerged as the premier instrument for clandestine operations. Based upon the teachings and experiences of the British secret services, Donovan took the concept of "shadow war" to a new level. He centralized American clandestine efforts under one agency and then expanded their operational reach. The emerging techniques and endeavors of the OSS are detailed by the very agents who were tasked to achieve the impossible; infiltrate the German Reich, gather intelligence, coordinate resistance, and

propagate misinformation.

The reader is presented with a unique insight into the dark underworld of espionage, counterintelligence, guerilla tactics, and psychological warfare. Among the many agents depicted is Lieutenant William Wheeler, leader of a 15-man group, whose mission was to jump behind German lines into Northern Italy and coordinate resistance groups and gather intelligence. Agents such as Wheeler routinely found themselves isolated and operating deep inside hostile territory. They worked in small groups and survived with the aid of resistance and freedom fighters. Theirs was a mission of danger hidden behind a shroud of secrecy. If captured they were sure to be tortured and ultimately executed; there would be no rescue and their fate hinged upon the ability to construct a thin parapet of plausible deniability.

*Operatives, Spies, and Saboteurs* is interesting, historical, and even exciting; yet, the book suffers from the author's inability to seamlessly integrate interview excerpts and documented evidence. At certain points it is difficult to discern who is doing the narration; at other times, it is nearly impossible to grasp the relationship between an inserted quote and the already established text. Sadly, the author struggles in the presentation of his research and the result is a disjunct depiction of what is otherwise a very engaging historiography.

While this book certainly has its drawbacks, the raw content is too powerful and poignant to be outright dismissed. The harrowing experiences of the OSS agents are truly remarkable and before now, have gone largely unnoticed. For anyone who is even remotely interested in World War II, clandestine operations, or intelligence activities, this book is worth your attention.

#### RECENT AND RECOMMENDED

***Accidental Warrior: the Forging of an American Soldier.* By Andy O'Meara, Jr. Elderberry Press, 2002. 294 pages. \$29.95.**

***Battling for Saipan: The True Story of an American Hero — Lt. Col. William J. O'Brien.* By Francis A. O'Brien. Presidio Press, 2003. 370 pages. \$17.95.**

***Misguided Weapons: Technological Failure and Surprise on the Battlefield.* By Azriel Lorber, Ph.D. Brassey's, Inc. 2002. 293 pages. \$26.95.**

***Only the Dead Came Home.* By Andy O'Meara, Jr. Elderberry Press, 2003. 184 pages. \$19.95.**

***Storm From the Sea.* By Peter Young. Greenhill, 2002. 240 pages. \$18.95.**





In the Next Issue:

# Stryker Brigade Combat Teams

- Challenges and Potentials of an SBCT Rifle Platoon Leader
- JTF Raid: A SBCT at Joint Readiness Training Center

PIN: 081516-000



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
INFANTRY (USPS 370630)  
U.S. Army Infantry School  
ATTN: ATSH-ATI  
Fort Benning, Georgia 31995-5593

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

PRESORT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
COLUMBUS GA  
PERMIT #81